

Epaphroditus's Sickneſs

AND

RECOVERY,

In three Sermons.

The Firſt Preached at St. Michaels in Coventry, upon the 14th day of December in the morning, being the Lecture day.

And the two other Preached the Lords Day following, being the 18th of the ſame inſtant, in the ſame Church, *Anno Dom.* 1670.

By Thomas Alleſtree, M. A. Rector of Aſhew in the County of Warwick.

— *I was brought low, and he helped me, Pſal.* 116. 6.
The Lord hath chaſtned me ſore; but he hath not given me over unto Death, Pſal. 118. 18.

Nè umbrâ quidem corporis, nedum viſo ac ſano corpore dignus eſt, quiſquis uſque ad eò Stoicus eſt factus, ut vitam ac ſanitatē corporis, quâ utraque ad gloriā Dei uti poterit, non ſentiat donum eſſe divinæ munificentiæ, ſed ſuſque deque faciat, ſive ſanus ſit ſive ægrotet, vivatne vel moriatur. *Muſculus in Pſal.* 102. 3, 4.

L O N D O N,

Printed for the Author, *Anno Dom.* 1671.

Richardson

and

John W. Richardson

John W. Richardson

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IMI

To the Right Worshipful Mr. Thomas
King Mayor, with the Aldermen
his Brethren, and the rest of the
Inhabitants of the City of Coventry.

The Author wisheth continuance of health
with increase of grace and peace.

SIRS,

THESE three following Sermons (though
conceived elsewhere) were first brought
forth in your Ancient & Honourable City.
The subject matter of them is seasonable for
these sickly times. Though you in your City,
(as I am informed by * those who have best
reason to know) have been this last year as
healthful as at other times, (a mercy which
you can never be too thank-full for) yet the
Towns and Villages about you, yea the most
part of this Nation (I hope you are sensible
of it) have been sorely visited with sick-
ness; I therefore, at the importunity of
some Friends, thought good to make these
Notes publick. The Word preached is too
soon † forgotten, and reacheth but to few, † Vox au-
but Printed may be seen by many, and per- dita perit,
sed litera-
sed at pleasure. I hope these Sermons that scripta
manebit.
found acceptance with many when Preach-
ed, will, being Printed, find the like accep-
tance

sance with the sober Christian. You have
that here presented to the eye, which was de-
livered to the ear : for I have made little
or no alteration, onely I have inserted se-
veral Latine Sentences, (which I did not
mention in the Pulpit, partly because I
would avoid the suspicion of vain-glory,
and partly because they would have taken
up too much of that little time allotted, every
Sand of which we should frugally improve
to the profit of the bearer). You that under-
stand Latine, may read these Quotations to
your better satisfaction : You that like
them not, because you cannot understand
them, may over-look them. These Ser-
mons, like the Author, come forth in a plain
dress: My desire was not, with elegant
cadencies of words, to please an itching
ear, but with plain Scripture-evidence, to
affect an honest heart: And strong-lines
could not reasonably be expected from one so
weak as I then was, being but lately reco-
vered of a grievous sickness. Well, dear
Friends, whatever they be, I humbly pre-
sent them to your acceptance, as a testimo-
ny of my thankfulness, and to shew how
willing I am

Ashow, March

27. 1671.

To serve your Souls
in what I may,

T. Allestree.



Epaphroditus's sickness.

First Sermon.

PHIL: 2. 27.

For indeed he was sick, nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him.--



THE *Philippians*, to whom *St. Paul* wrote his Epistle, were Inhabitants of *Philippi*, which was a chief City of *Macedonia*, and a *Colonie*, Acts 16. 12. It was the *Metropolis* of that part of *Macedonia*, and a Roman *Colonie*, whose Inhabitants came from Rome to dwell there, vers. 21. (* *Coloniae sunt gentes ad terram aliquam habitandum missae*, saith *Musculus*). It was formerly called *Crenida*, ἀρὸς τῶν κρήνης, because of the fruitful Fountains that issued from the Hill on which it was built. (Eo

* *Musculus* in *Phil. 1. 12*

*quod circa collem cui inaedificata fuit uberrimi
Fontes promanarent. Muscul. in Phil. i. v. 1.)*

* Itinera-
rium totius
sacrae
Scripturae,
p. 539.

Muscul. in
Phil. i. 1.

Some* say there were veins of Gold found close by it. Philip King of Macedon, Father of Alexander the Great, caused it in the year before Christ, 354. to be reedified and enlarged, and then after his own name called it *Philippus*, or *Philippi*. (*Hanc Philippus Rex Macedonia munitiorem reddidit propter vicinos Thraces, ac in nominis sui memoriam Philippus vocavit.* Muscul.). It was enriched with many priviledges,

much Gold found there: but it was not so happy in that, as in *Pauls* praying, who coming thither wrought many Miracles, taught the Gospel, and converted many to the Faith and Knowledge of Christ, as you may read, *Acts 16*.

* See Dr.
Hammond
his Pre-
face in
annot. on
2 Epist.
Corinthi-
ans.

† See Iti-
ner. Tot.
S. Scrip.
540.

From* hence St. *Paul* wrote his second Epistle to the *Corinthians*, and sent it to *Corinth* by *Titus* and *Luke*, which was, saith an † Author, 292 Dutch miles. He wrote also this Epistle to the *Philippians* from *Rome*, to the Inhabitants of *Philippi*, and sent it by the hands of *Epaphroditus*, which was, saith the same † Author, 628 miles; and he reckons by common Dutch miles, whereof four thousand paces make a mile, (p. 3.). The occasion of this Epistle was this, The *Philippians* hearing that St. *Paul*, who had planted a Church among them, was imprisoned at *Rome*, sent *Epaphroditus* to visit him, and supply his wants: From whom the Apostle having received the testimony of their kindness and constancy, and with-all hearing that false Apostles were crept in amongst them, who were enemies to the Cross of Christ, and per-
verted

7

* *Heming.*
in argu-
mentum,
Epist. ad
Phil.

Zanclus,
in Phil.
2. 26.

Epaphroditus's sickness.

He sat solitary, as men in extream sorrow love to be alone: He was exceedingly disquieted to think what sorrow the report of his sickness brought to them. But, good God! how are people otherwise affected in these sinful times towards their faithful Ministers, wishing them sick, and transported with joy to hear of their sickness: So that it is matter of grief to many Ministers in their sickness to think that others do insult, and by their rejoycing, add affliction to affliction. But the *Philippians* love towards their faithful Pastour was so great, that they were even sick to hear of his sickness; nay, *Epaphroditus* feared lest this sad news would be their death. (*Fuit anxius animi propter Philippenses ne nimirum tristitia conficerentur*, Musc. l. in locum.) He was grievously afraid lest they should wear away with over-much grief at the sad tydings of his sickness.

For indeed, saith the Apostle in the words of my Text, *he was sick nigh unto Death; but God had mercy on him.*

In the words we have two parts.

1. *Epaphroditus's Sickness*; where observe, first, the Patient, *Epaphroditus*, he was sick. Secondly, The manner of his sickness, it was very grievous, for *he was nigh unto Death.*

In the second part we have *Epaphroditus's* Recovery set down; wherein observe, 1. the Physician, that was *God*. 2. The cure wrought by him, *he had mercy on him.*

Epaphroditus's sickness.

2

To begin with the first part, *Epaphroditus* was the Patient, and his Distemper very grievous, for he was *sick nigh unto death*.

The Greek word *ἀσθενής* signifies to be very weak and sick, even at death's door. [*ἀσθενὲς infirmis viribus sum, languens, graviter egrotans, Joh. 11. 3. ἀσθενῆ, hinc ἀσθενῆς, ab ἀ privat & σθένος robur. Omnibus viribus destitutus & tum sibi tum aliis prorsus inutilis sicut cadaver.* Beza in Rom. 5. 6.]

He had *faciem cadaverosam*, Death had taken possession on this sick man's countenance: He was grown so weak (and it was matter of grief to them, * *Quod* * *Muscul.* *Apostolo amplius subministrare non poterat*) *in locum.* that

he was a burden and not an help to the Apostle. But to shew yet further how near death he was, the Apostle adds *παρὰ πύλινθον θανάτου*.

[Which some render *vicinus morti*, so *Marlorat*. And *Musculus* who adds, *Corripitur morbo tam gravi ut ad ipsas portas mortis usque pervenisse videretur. Proximè mortem*, *Piscator*, *Hemingius*. *Proximè ad mortem*, *Beza*. *Usque ad mortem*, *Tremel*. *Aquinas*, *Osiander*, *Estius*, who adds, *Lethali morbo laborabat ita ut moriturum motuerem.*]

He was a Neighbour to Death, or neighbouring upon Death: He was even upon the confines of the King of Terrours.

If every Man in his healthful state be like a Mariner (as some say) in the Sea of this World, within a few inches of Death: Surely languishing *Epaphroditus* was within a hairs breadth of it. But if you ask me what his particular Distemper was, I must tell you, I know not. The

Physitian may tell will say (*Non erat affectus*

mati

*Dignis amor ture-
motus,
Quatuor
aut Sep-
tem. Ju-
ven.*

Epaphroditus's sickness.

vari ideoque inter navigandum contraxit corporis sui debilitatem. Muscul. in loc.) that he was Sea-sick: And indeed, as *Hemingsius* observes, that long journey by Sea might be an occasion of his sickness, and the Apostle seems to insinuate as much, *vers. 30.* But what his particular Distemper was, we must be content to be ignorant, seeing the Holy Ghost doth not reveal it. Contenting my self with what the Text holds forth, that *he was sick*, yea, *nigh unto death*; I take up this Point of Doctrine.

Doct. That the best of God's dear Servants, whether Ministers or others, may be very sick, or sorely visited with sickness. Epaphroditus was a good Christian as well as a good Minister.

*Hinc li-
quet vel
sanctissi-
mos ad-
versa affi-
ci valeru-
dine. Bul-
ling in
Phil. 2. 27.*

Many are the afflictions of the Righteous, saith the Psalmist, *Psal. 34. 19.* Diseases, amongst other afflictions, are the portion of God's dearest Children. *Jacob* was sick, *Gen. 48. 1.* So was *Hezekiah*, *2 King. 20. 1.* So *Job* was smitten with a sore Boil, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, *Job 2. 7, 8.* He was so loathsome a Creature none would come near him; he was fain to be his own Chyrurgeon, and his dressing Instrument was a piece of a broken Pot; see likewise *Job 7. 3, 4, 5, 13, 14, 15, 16.* So *David* was sick nigh unto death, read *Psal. 6. 8* & *Psal. 38.* So under the New Testament, we read *Dorcas* that Woman full of good Works, and Alms-deeds which she did, fell sick, — *Acts 9. 36, 37.* So *Paul* himself saith, *We had that Sentence of Death in*

Epaphroditus's sickness.

II

our selves, &c. 2 Cor. 1. 9. He means the great danger he was in by reason of his Adversaries, or by reason of sickness, or both: Thus he was *in deaths oft*, i. e. in deadly dangers, 2 Cor. 11. 23. So before this you read of some in the Church of Corinth that were *chastened of the Lord* by some violent sickness, that they *might not be condemned with the World*, 1 Cor. 11. 30, 32. Timothy had but bad health, which made the Apostle to give him this advice, *To drink no longer Water, but to use a little Wine for his Stomachs sake, and his often infirmities*, 1 Tim. 5. 23. So we read of Trophimus the Ephesian, Paul's Disciple and Companion in travels, Acts 20. 4. & 21. 29. left of Paul at * *Miletum* sick, 2 Tim. 4. 20. But we need not light up a Candle at noon-day, and seek for that which is neither hid nor lost. This truth is confirmed, or Proposition verified, by daily experience. I therefore pass on to the Reasons of the Point, which may be taken from three heads.

1. From their natural constitution.

The Godly, though they be the Sons of God by the grace of Adoption, yet they are the Sons of *Adam* by natural production: And as the Wood breeds a Worm that eats it, the Garment a Moth that frets it, and Fruit that which doth corrupt it, so natural bodies produce Diseases to destroy them. The bodies of the best are earthly houses, 2 Cor. 5. 1. which moulder away of themselves. The Apostle calls the body,

* This *Miletum*, or rather *Mileum*, Act. 20. 17. was a City famous for Wool and Cloathing. *Nec Mileum erat velle dignatus. Martial.*

body, even of the best men, *a vile body*, be-
Calv: in cause (*Tot miseriis obnoxium*) subject amongst
Phil. 3. 21. other miseries, to sickness and distempers: If
the humours of the body be but a little stirred,
they turn to the nutriment of a Disease: *Our*
very blood, (as Dr. Taylor saith) *wherein our*
life dwells, is the scene under which nature act
many sharp Feavers and heavy Sicknesses. Man
men, (saith another * Divine) *that for the present*
are free from the pains of Diseases, yet have their
enemies in their bodies in divers parts of them
laid, as it were, in Garison, which may and will
break out upon them at a time they know not.

* Mr. By-
field, on
1 Pet. 2. 24
p. 883.

2. From inherent corruption.

The best besides original corruption, have
many actual provocations, *1 King.* 8. 46. *Psal.*
19. 12. *Psal.* 143. 2. *Prov.* 20. 9. *Eccles.* 7.
20. *1 John* 1. 8. *If we say we have no sin, we*
deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us.
If the best of us, saith he, hath no sin, he sins
in saying so; for this is sin in the best, (*Nemo*
esse sine delicto potest quamdiu indumento carnis
oneratus est. Lactant.) Now sin is the procuring
cause of sickness. Had not sin entred into the
World, there had been no sickness. Had our first
Parents continued in a state of holiness, they
had continued in a state of health and happiness
everlasting; but their eating the forbidden
fruit, brought Diseases upon them and their
posterity. It is sin that brings all mankind, even
the best to the Grave, *Rom.* 5. 12. And no
wonder if it cast them upon a sick-bed. Sin
is the *Pandora's Box* that filleth the World with

De vero
cultu, lib.
6. c. 13.

innu-

innumerable diseases and calamities: Like another *Jonah* it raiseth storms and agitations in the Body, as he did in the Sea, (*Jonah* 1. 4, 7. compared) What saith *David*, *Psal.* 31. 10. *My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: My strength faileth, because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed.* It was sin that weakened him, and brought (as it were) his body into a consumption. So *Psal.* 38. 3. *There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger,* (*Agnoscat morbi istius causam esse iram Dei propter scelera sua in se accensam. Muscul. in loc.*); *neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin.* So *vers.* 9. *My Wounds stink, and are corrupt; because of my foolishness.* So *Psal.* 39. 11. *God with rebukes doth correct man for iniquity.* Diseases are properly the Rod of the Lord, and, the Rod for the fools back, seems to have been a Proverb amongst the Jews, *Prov.* 10. 13. & 26. 3. Hence the *Psalmist* allusively tells us, *Psal.* 107. 17. *Fools because of their transgressions, and because of their iniquities are afflicted.* The best of men are no wiser than they should be; nay, they too oft play the fool as *David* did, 2 *Sam.* 24. 10. and no wonder if God chastise them with sickness.

3. And lastly, From Divine Ordination, 1 *The.* 3. 3.

The Devil cannot smite us with sores or sickness without God's Commission, or at least without his Permission, as you may see in the case of *Job*, *Job* 2. 6. Whatever may be the instru-

instrumental or material cause of any affliction, yet God himself is the supream efficient; Job 5. 6. as *Eliphaz* said, *Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.* By this proverbial Speech, he would have us look higher than to secondary causes, even to God himself as the Author; for so he is, *Isa.* 45. 7. so *Amos* 3. 6. *Shall there be evil in a City, and the Lord hath not done it?* It is not to be understood of the (*malum culpa, sed poenæ*) evil of sin, but of affliction and punishment. God then sends sickness to his Children, or he is pleased to exercise them with sickness and such like afflictions for good ends; I'll name two especially.

1. *For the purging out, or preventing of sin,* *Psal.* 119. 67, 71. so *Isa.* 1. 25. & *Isa.* 27. 9. so *Heb.* 12. 10, 11. God sends sickness, as he sent an Angel with a drawn Sword in his hand to *Balaam*, *Numb.* 22. 32. to divert us from sinful courses. God takes away corporal to recover spiritual health; he weakens thee in body, to weaken the body of sin in thee. If he cast thee into a Feaver or burning Ague, it is to refine thee, and make thee a *Vessel unto Honour, sanctified, and meet for the Masters use, and prepared unto every good work,* as expressions be *2 Tim.* 2. 21. I have somewhere read how *Basil* the Great, that holy Man, being much troubled with the Head-ach, prayed to God to remove it, and was at length healed of it, but afterwards he felt many bad motions and sinful lusts stirring in him; then he earnestly de-

fired

fired God to return to him the Head-ach again, rather than suffer the peace of his Soul to be disquieted with those lusts. So that you see bodily Pains and Diseases are sent by God to prevent or purge out sin. But more particularly God sends sickness to prevent or purge out these following sins; to name a few.

1. Pride.

See 2 Cor. 12. 7. Some by the Thorn in the flesh understand some extream pain, as the Head-ach; so *Theophilast*. Some refer it to the *Iliaca Passio*, or Wind in the small Guts; so *Aquinas*. Some to the Gout or pain in the Stomach, as *Nazianzene* and *Basil* are said to interpret it. These or the like bodily Distempers may be well compared to a Thorn in the flesh, because they are as painful to the body, as if a Thorn or Splinter was thrust into the flesh. This Thorn was sent to let out the wind of *Pride*; *Left*, saith the Apostle, *I should be exalted above measure*. *Job* under his sores and sickness, and other afflictions that God exercised him with, confessed his vileness, and abhorred himself in Dust and Ashes, *Job* 40. 4. & 42. 6.

See Mr. Leigh's Annot. on 2 Cor. 12. 7.

2. Worldly-mindedness.

God sends sickness to withdraw their heart and affections from things here below, and to cause them to mount up and aspire more unto Heaven. The best are apt to fall in love with this wretched world, as *Peter* said, *Luke* 9. 33. *Master, it is good for us to be here*. God in sickness makes his servants willing to remove: They see Riches and Friends cannot ease them of their pains, and therefore they desire to be gone, *Phil.*

I. 23.

1. 23. and to be translated into the new *Jerusalem*, where no Inhabitant shall say he is sick. *Isa.* 33. 24.

3. *Security.*

In health and prosperity the best are apt to forget God. As *David* said, *Psal.* 30. 6, 7. *In his prosperity, I shall never be moved; Lord by thy favour thou hast made my Mountain to stand strong:* but when God did hide his face, and left him to the dangerous assaults of his Enemies, or fury of some sickness, then he was troubled and cryed to the Lord, and pleaded with him in prayer, as you may read in the following verses, 8, 9, 10, 11. When he casts his people on their backs in a sick-bed, then especially they look upward.

4. *Insensibleness of others sufferings under sickness.*

Most men are insensible of the sufferings of others, like those voluptuous Epicures, as if unconcerned in others miseries, they are not affected with their Brethrens calamities, *Amos* 6. 3, 4, 5, 6. Even the best are too too stoical herein, whilst in Health, not sufficiently sensible of the miseries that others lie under by reason of sickness. But when God hath visited us with sickness, then we pity those that lie under the same or the like sufferings. The Poet *Virgil* brings in *Dido* speaking thus.

Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.

She being in misery, did pity those that were in misery. *David*, whom God had much exercised

exercised with sickness, had learnt to pity others, as you may see *Psal.* 35. 13, 14.

5. Unthankfulness.

We do not, whilst we are healthful and strong, rightly prize health, nor are we duly thankful for so great a mercy. *Carendo magis quam fruendo*; We know the worth of things best by the want of them. As God threatned to take away *Corn, and Wine, and Oyl* from *Judah*, because *she did not know*, i. e. thankfully acknowledge them to be Gods good Gifts; *Hos.* 2. 8, 9. So God many times deprives his People of health, that they may learn to prize it the more, and to improve it more to his glory when he sends it again.

6. The sixth and last sin that sickness sent by God is a means to purge out or prevent, is, *Forgetfulness of Death*.

Jerusalem in prosperity *remembered not her last end*, *Lam.* 1. 9. The best of us, in times of health, too too seldom think of Death, which made *Moses* cry out, *Deut.* 32. 29. *O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!* God therefore sends sickness, which is, *Ante-ambulo Mortis*, the fore-runner of Death; to mind them that the *King of Terrors* is not far off: they at such a time expect Death, and look upon it as that which will certainly come. Bishop Andrews *Abel Re-* said oft in his sickness, *It must come once, and divinus in* why not here? *David* in sickness saw the vanity his life. of Man in his best state, *Psal.* 39. 5. *Surely every man at his best state is altogether vanity.* Selah. And *vers.* 11. he warbles it over again.

on his doleful Harp, — *Surely every man is vanity. Selah.* So *Moses* under God's afflicting hand, *Psal. 90. 7.* saw the frailty of Man's life, and therefore prayed, *vers. 12. So teach us to number our dayes, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.* Thus you see God send sickness for the purging out or preventing of several sins in his People.

2. The other end that God hath in such passages of his providence towards his Servants, is *for the tryal and exercise of their Graces.*

Affliction is sent to try us, *Psal. 66. 10, 11. Jer. 9. 7. 1 Pet. 4. 12.* It is both the Touch-stone and Whet-stone of Grace. A Fever, or some such like Distemper, is as a fiery Tryal to try the truth of God's Graces in us, and to set them awork; in so much as the Apostle saith, *2 Cor. 12. 10. I take pleasure in infirmities, — for when I am weak, then am I strong.* When he was weak in Body, he was strong in Grace. But more particularly, God sends sickness to try and exercise these following Graces.

1. *Faith and Hope,* (I put them both together, for they are nigh of kin).

The Apostle speaks of God's suffering his People to be *in heaviness through manifold temptations,* that is afflictions, *for the tryal of their Faith,* as you may see *1 Pet. 1. 6, 7. Job's* Faith was seen and set awork under his sufferings. *Job 13. 15. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.* It is Faith indeed to trust in that God that seems to frown. So hope is seen and set awork in a tempest. It is compared

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to an *Anchor*, Heb. 6, 19. whose use is best seen in a storm.

2. *Patience.*

In times of affliction there is matter for *patience* as well as *faith* to be exercised about, *Rev.* 13. 10. so *2 Thess.* 1. 4. The Apostle saith, *Tribulation worketh Patience*, *Rom.* 5. 3. He means, It occasions the exercise of *Patience*. *James* 5. 11. *Ye have heard of the Patience of Job*, saith Saint *James*: Ye had not heard so much of his *Patience*, had it not been for his sickness, and such like afflictions which God exercised him with. Sickness is the School of *Patience*.

3. *Love to God.*

Jer. 2. 2. *I remember thee*, (saith the Lord) *the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the Wilderness, in a Land that was not sown.* It is love and kindness indeed to follow God in a Wilderness of temptations and tryals: to love him even when we groan under sad Distempers, and can feel nothing (as it were) but signs of his displeasure. The World is apt to think that Believers love God only for what they gain by his service, as though their love to God was purely mercenary; as the Devil said, *Dost Job fear God for nought*, &c. *Job* 1. 9, 10, 11. so *Job* 2. 4, 5. The Devil said, *Skin for Skin, yea; all that a man hath will he give for his life: but put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.* God; as you read afterwards, suffered the Devil forcibly to afflict *Job*, *vers.* 6, 7, 8. *Yea, Job's Wife*

Wife took the Devils part, as you see *vers. 9.* The Devil handed over a temptation to him by his Wife, hoping thereby to prevail with *Job* as he did by the Wife prevail with *Adam*, *Gen. 3. 6.* But the Devil could not, nor *Job's* Wife (that crooked Rib, that cross piece) to help him, cause that good Man to curse his God: See how sharply he rebukes her for her folly, *vers. 10.* *Thou speakest as one of the foolish Women speaketh: What, shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this or hitherto did not Job sin with his lips.* And though we read afterwards of his cursing the day of his birth, *Chap. 3.* and of other rash speeches proceeding from him, *Chap. 6.* and elsewhere: Yet his resolution was, *Not to let go his integrity so long as he lived*, *Job 27. 5, 6.* Here was a full proof of the sincerity of his love to God, and strength of his Christian courage: For if *thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small*, *Prov. 24. 10.*

4. And lastly, *Prayer.*

Sickness sets Prayer awork like trouble, *Psal. 18. 4, 5, 6. Psal. 88. per totum. Psal. 116. 3, 4. so Isa. 26. 16. Lord, (saith the Prophet) in trouble have they visited thee: they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.* When God visits his People with sickness, or some such like affliction, then especially they visit him with prayers. Prayers which before did but, as it were, drop out, now and then a prayer, are in time of trouble frequently and fervently put up unto God. *Christ in his agony prayed more earnestly, Luk. 22. 44.*

Then

Epaphroditus's sickness.

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Thus when the outward man is ready to perish or decay, through sickness or some such like affliction, then the inward Man is renewed, i. e. gathereth strength (Isa. 40. 31.) by daily pressures, 2 Cor. 4. 16. As the * Palm-tree ^{* Depressa resurgit,} the more it is depressed, the more it flourisheth. ^{Ps 92. 12.} As Jacob said to Laban, Gen. 30. 30. It was but little which thou hadst before I came: but it is now increased to a multitude: And the Lord hath blessed thee since my coming. So may sickness say to many a child of God, It was but little (in comparison) which thou hadst before my coming, but little Faith, Patience, Love to God, Devotion, &c. but now it is much increased. Divine Graces, like Torches in a dark night, shine brightest 'midst manifold afflictions.

Let us now come to Use and Application, which through Gods blessing may be most profitable.

1. This consideration should be a Cordial to comfort us in sickness.

It should make thee and me patient under sickness, when God is pleased to send it: Nothing befalls us, but what befalls God's dearest Servants. David, Job, Hezekiah, Paul, Epaphroditus, and others, (as you have heard) even the bravest-spirited, the wisest, the holiest have been sorely visited with sickness. There is no temptation (i. e. affliction) but taken you but what is humane, (so the word is, *ἀνθρώπινη*) or, as it is rendered, common to Man, 1 Cor.

Epaphroditus's Sickness.

10. 13. Yea, to the best of men, and being thus ordinary, it may be the better endured.

Solamen miseris socios habuisse doloris.

So then, as the Author to the *Hebrews* speaks, *Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses*; I add, with so many examples of good men in sickness, — *Let us run with patience*, Heb. 12. 1. As Phocion said to one that was condemned to the same death with him, *Art thou not glad to fare as Phocion doth*? So shall not we be glad, or at least be content and patient under sickness, seeing we fare no worse than God's dearest Servants do. Nay, let us cast our eyes abroad, and we shall find many our betters by far in Grace far more afflicted than our selves be with sickness. Our sickness being neither so violent nor so permanent as theirs. Now shall not we be content to sip of that bitter Cup which they drink so deeply of? *Epaphroditus's* sickness, besides the violence thereof, was cloathed with this sad circumstance, that he was * *Procul à suis remotus*, He was far from home in a strange place: But we at home amongst friends and acquaintance, who are at hand to give friendly visits, and to minister to our necessities.

* *Muscul.*
in loc.

Rise 26

2. This consideration *should strike terror into the hearts of impatient wretches.*

If sickness and pain be the condition of Gods dear Servants here, what will be the portion of the

the wicked hereafter in the day of their visitation? If they, who shall be *Heirs of Salvation*, Heb. 1. 14. be in such a sick condition that they know not what to do, which way to turn them for ease; how easeless and painful will their condition one day be, who are *Vessels of wrath fitted to destruction*? Rom. 9. 22. see 1 Pet. 4.

17. For the time is come (it may be rendred, ὅτι ὁ καιρὸς according to the Original, that it is the season) ποῦ ὁ ἔλεος that judgment begin at the House of God; and οὐκ ἔστιν ἄν τις if it first begin at us, what shall be the end of us.

them that obey not the Gospel of God? Now in this life judgments (i. e. chastisements, Psal. 7. 11.) befall God's dear Servants for their sinful infirmities, who are here called the *House of God*, (for they are the Temples of the Holy-Ghost, 1 Cor. 3. 16.) and if judgment begin at us first, what shall the end of them be that obey not the Gospel? However for the present they live, become old, yea are mighty in power, as Job speaks, Job 21. 7. And their Houses are safe from fear, neither is the Rod of God upon them, vers. 9. Yet their end will be sad, vers.

30. The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction: They shall be brought forth to the day of wrath. So the Psalmist (whether Asaph or David it is uncertain) stumbled at the prosperity of the wicked, Psal. 73. 2, 3. He saw they lived merrily here, and when they died, they died without much pain in their sickness; for, saith he, vers. 4. There are no bonds, that is, no pangs in their death, q. d. Their death is not caused by those violent and painful assaults, as other mens frequently are. So vers. 5. They

See Dr. Hammond in 1 Sam. 73. 4.

are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. This stumbled him, as you may read afterwards, but at last he recovers himself, having made his resort to the Sanctuary of God, *vers. 17.* He learned out of his Word, that God governed all things wisely, and had Judgments in store for them, as you may read *vers. 18, 19, 20.* God lift them the higher, that their fall might be the greater.

—— Tolluntur in altum
Ut lapsu graviore ruant. ——

So then though wicked men sleep securely in sin, yet *their damnation sleepeth not*, 2 Pet. 2. 3. *When they say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travel upon a Woman with Child,* (which comes suddenly, certainly, and painfully) *and they shall not escape*, 1 Thel. 5. 3. *The wicked shall be turned into Hell*, Psal. 9. 17. *Jesus Christ will come upon these with a vengeance, and they shall be punished with everlasting destruction*, as you may read 2 Theff. 1. 7, 8, 9. I end this with that of David, Psal. 11. 5, 6. *The Lord tryeth the Righteous; but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their Cup.* They shall be continually drinking the bitter cup of divine fury: There shall be no *Lucida intervalla*, no respite, no breathing fits, (as the Righteous have here in their sickness) but their

their pains shall be continual, without either intermission or mitigation.

3. This consideration *should keep us from* Use 3.
condemning those for the greatest sinners,
that are in this kind the greatest sufferers.

Indeed we live in a censorious Age. The World judgeth those most wicked, that are most afflicted; we are apt to conclude, that God hates those most whom he visits with most sickness. Thus the *Barbarians* dealt with *Paul*, who seeing the venomous Beast hang on his hand, said among themselves, *No doubt this Man is a murderer, whom though he hath escaped the Sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live,* Acts 28. 4. Thus *David's Enemies*, by the sharpness and violence of his Distemper, concluded God was become his Enemy, * *Psal. 41.* * *Verbum*

8. *Job's three Friends* were to blame to accuse *Job* for an Hypocrite, because God had forely visited him with sickness; he calls them truly, *Forgers of lies, and Physicians of no value,* *Belial effusum est in ipso, i.e. puni-*
 13. 4. They forged lies both of God and *Job*, *tur divinitus ob scelus aliquod commissum.*
 and like unskillful Physicians, applyed Corrasives instead of Cordials. And elsewhere he calls them, *Miserable Comforters,* Job 16. 2. They came as Comforters, freely offering themselves, *Muscul. in locum,*
 he sent not for them, Job 2. 11. But they were pitiful ones in that sense, that *Job* calls them *Miserable comforters*, for by their censures and bitter speeches, instead of lessening, they did encrease his burthen; instead of easing, they did

did aggravate his grief. And God himself was highly displeased with *Eliphaz*, *Bildad*, and *Zophar*, in as much as by their perverse disputings, and false reasonings, they had wronged even God himself, *Job* 42. 7, 8, 9. Let us then know that God's dear Children (as *Epaphroditus*, a dear Servant of the Lord here did) may lie under great afflictions and dear afflictions at the same time. *Job*, even now mentioned, whom God boasts of again and again as a *None-such* for piety, was smitten (*Job* 2. 7.) with such an angry burning Boil as God plagued the *Egyptians* with, *Exod.* 9. 9, 10. and after threatened to punish a rebellious people with, *Deut.* 28. 27. If *Job* had measured God's displeasure by the sadness of his Distemper, he might have concluded indeed that God had hated him and cast him off: but upright *Job* doubted not of God's favour under his saddest tryals. We read of one *Lazarus*, the Brother of *Mary* and *Martha*, *John* 11. 3. that was in his extream sickness beloved of Christ. And we read of another *Lazarus*, *Luke* 16. 20. who was poor and pitiful, lying at the rich mans gate full of sores, yet after death carried by Angels into *Abrahams Bosom*, *vers.* 22. Let the words of the wise man shut up this, *Eccles.* 9. 1, 2. — No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them: All things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, &c.

4. Let

4. Let this consideration keep us from weeping immoderately when Godly Friends depart this life. Use 4.

They are freed from those sicknesses and pains which here they groaned under. *Rev. 14. 13.* *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, — for they rest from their labours, ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων,* from pain and pains-taking. The World to them is as *Egypt* to the *Israelites*, a place of pains and sorrow, *Exod. 3. 7.* When they die, God wipes away all tears from their eyes. See *Rev. 21. 4.* *There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things (as sin, sickness, &c.) are passed away.* If the dead in the Lord could speak, they would say to surviving Friends that follow them to the Grave with sorrowful hearts, as Christ did to the Daughters of *Jerusalem*, that followed him to his crucifixion sorrowing, *Luk. 23. 28.* *Weep not for me, but weep for your selves and for your children.* Ye are in the Valley of Tears, toils'd upon the Waves of a troublesome World, subject as to sin so to sickness and sorrow: But as for us, we are at the Haven of Eternal-rest. Weep not for us, but weep for your selves and your Children. Indeed did we but seriously consider the manifold miseries that God's dear Servants are subject unto whilst in this World, we would give thanks rather than murmur, when God by death sets them free. The Church in the Funerals of the Dead hath taught

us as much: *We give thee hearty thanks for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our Brother (or Sister) out of the miseries of this sinful World.*

5. and last
Wife.

But fifthly and lastly, (for I hasten); This consideration methinks should put Christians upon sympathizing one with another.

This God calls for, *Rom. 12. 15. 1 Pet. 3. 8. see Heb. 13. 3. Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being your selves also in the Body.* In the Body, that is (say some) as Member of the same Body, (for so believers are, *Ephes. 5. 23, 30. so Col. 1. 18.*) they are Member of Christ's Mystical and Spiritual Body: And as the Apostle speaks, *1 Cor. 12. 25, 26. The Members should have the same care one for another; and if one Member suffer, all the Members suffer with it:* So then if we take it in this sense, you are members of the same Body, and therefore ought to sympathize one with another. Others there are that by this expression, *being your selves also in the body*, understand it thus, as being your selves living Creatures, *2 Cor. 12. 2.* Natures Frame not being as yet dissolved, you are in the same frail humane estate, subject to all that befalls any man; and therefore you should be affected towards them, as though you personally shared in their sufferings.

Dr. Hammond in
Heb. 23. 3.

Do not then, Christians, stand as Stoicks or Rocks, as unconcerned with others sicknesses and sorrows: Put your selves (as it were) in their

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their condition, and do as you would be done by; be as pitiful to them, as you would have others be to you if you were in their case. You know not how soon sickness may befall you, and so you stand in like need of help. If you stay at home, sickness may steal upon you: if you travel abroad, it may pursue you, as it did *Epaphroditus*, who being far from home fell sick, and his sickness was grievous, for he was nigh unto death.

Epaphro-



Epaphroditus's Recovery.

Second Sermon.

PHIL. 2. 27.

— *but God had mercy on him.*—



ON the last Lecture-day I made an entrance upon this Text and we spoke to *Epaphroditus*, his sickness; I shall this day (God willing) speak of his recovery, which the Text clearly holds forth unto us. In which I observe two parts, which I intend to prosecute as time shall give leave.

1. *Epaphroditus's Physician*, and that was *God*.
2. The Cure wrought by him, *Had mercy on him*.

The

Epaphroditus's recovery.

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The Greek word *Elen*, signifies to pity or have mercy upon; so think it hath dependance upon the Hebrew Name of God, *Elohim*, because it is the property of God to shew mercy.

Now mercy in God may be thus defined; *Misericordia est quâ propensus est Deus ad succurrendum suis creaturis in aliquâ miseriâ constitutis, iisque reipsâ succurrit.* Wendelin. It is an attribute or property of God whereby he is inclined to help his creatures in misery, and doth really help them. So that *Homo lapsus*, Man considered as a sinner and in misery, is the object of it. And as * *Musculus* saith, *Misericordia Dei est unicum omnium afflictionum refugium.* The mercy of God is the onely refuge for afflicted persons to have recourse unto.

* In Psal.
6. 2.

Epaphroditus, this faithful Servant of the Lord, did much partake of God's mercy, God had been merciful to him with pardoning mercy, sanctifying mercy; and, had he died, God had crowned him with saving mercy, he had been freed from Hell, and enstated in everlasting happiness. But the mercy my Text speaks of, is temporal mercy, God delivering him from the great pain and peril he was in by reason of sickness. * *Eripiens eum periculo, & sanitati restituens, quod quidem beneficium misericordia vocatur, quatenus est miseria cujusdam remotio.* And Calvin saith, (*Exprimit morbi gravitatem ut clariùs eniteret Dei bonitas in redditâ sanitate*). Paul first mentioned the grievousness of his sickness, that the goodness and mercy of God might more perspicuously appear in his recovery. (*Deus misericors est ejus; i. e. misericorditer*

* *Estimâ
locum.*

Calvin in
locum.

corditer

*Muscul. in
locum.*

*corditer illum erexit. Misericordiam Dei pro
pere misericordia Dei ponit; saith Muscul.*
It was mercy then in God to preserve his life,
and restore him to health.

Hence I take up this point of Doctrine,
which being so clearly implied, must
be passed by without taking notice of, viz.

Doctr. That Life and Health are Mercies.

David in sickness prayed to God for health;
Psal. 6. 2. *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for*
** Muscul. I am weak. (* Ergo sentit miserum esse morbo*
in Pl. 6. 2. confici). O Lord, heal me, for my bones are
vexed. (*Est itaque sanum esse pars felicitatis
ac pro dono Dei habendum. Muscul.*) And
103. 3; 4. we find David there looked upon
Gods healing his bodily diseases, and redeem-
ing his life from destruction, to be a mercy, as
well as pardoning his sin. Job, though sometimes
under the raging heat and fury of his Distem-
per, cursed the day of his birth, and wished
God would cut him off; yet at other times,
when he was more himself, he looked upon life
as a mercy, see Job 10. 12. He there asserts his
life to be an act of divine favour, and the pre-
serving his Spirit (viz.) from departing out of
his body, to be a fruit of divine providence,
which he calls a Visitation. Jacob prized his
life, as you may gather from Gen. 32. 11, &
fearing his Brother would take revenge on
him, (as he threatned to do, Gen. 27. 41.)
he prayeth to God, and useth lawful policy to
save his life. So Mordecai and Esther tender
their

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their lives, and the lives of the Jews, *Esther* 4. 13, 14. & 7. 3. *Hezekiah* wept sore, when the Sentence went forth that he should die and not live, *Isa.* 38. 1, 2, 3. And *David* cried out, *Psal.* 102. 24. O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days. [*Naturale est & agnatum omnibus, ut dierum suorum plenitudinem consequi cupiant, ideòque agrè in medio vitæ cursu migrent ex hoc sæculo. Muscul.*] The Devil spake truly in that, (Years sometimes may speak truth) *Job* 2. 4. Skin for Skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. Men will part with Money, Carrels, Land, Liberty, and what not, to preserve life, as they did *Gen.* 47. Yea men will part with some members to preserve life.

Musculum
in *Psal.*
102. 24.

—— *Immedicabile vulnus*
Ense recidendum est nè pars sincera trahatur.

I lend this with that of the wise man, *Eccles.* 11. 7. Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the Sun.

But some may object and say,

Object. 1. If God send sickness for good ends to his People, as for the preventing and purging out of sin, and for the tryal and exercise of Christian Graces, surely it was no mercy in God to deliver this good man *Epaphroditus* from it.

Ans. Sickness in it self is a fruit of sin, and so a judgement and curse; it is a blessing

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OL. LY

*Estius in
Phil. 2. 27.*

only to such as have a sanctified use of it. It was sanctified indeed to *Epaphroditus*, and so wrought for his good, as Physick for the good of the Patient, *Heb. 12. 10.* but as it brought pain, it was grievous, and so his deliverance therefrom may be truly called a mercy, *Quatenus est miseria remotio*; as it removed his pain, and rendered him more serviceable to the Church.

Object. 2. But how can Epaphroditus's Recovery here be called a Mercy, when Death is far better than Life to Gods Children; which made the Apostle himself in the former Chapter, *Phil. 1. 23.* desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which (saith he) is far better? *Παρά γὰρ μέγα ἥσσον ἢ ζῆναι*; Multo magis melius; which may be thus rendred in English; More better by much. Had it not been far better for him to have been at the Haven of Rest, than to be as it were, by a cross wind kept back and tost upon the Waves of a troublesome World? Is not this World like a round Ball stuck full of Pins, so that upon what part soever the Godly are cast, they meet with trouble and misery? According to what of our Saviour, *John 16. 33.* In the World ye shall have tribulation: So that to have his life prolonged, what was it but a prolongation of his misery, and an adjournment of his happiness? *Tiberius Cæsar* said to one that requested death rather than long imprisonment, *Nondum tecum reddi in gratiam*, he told him, He had not such a favour for him. The like favour God here desires

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desires for the present to Epaphroditus; and can this be truly call'd a Mercy?

Ans. It cannot be denied, but death is better than life to the Godly, and rather to be chosen; for it frees from sin, sickness, Satans temptations, &c. Yea, it brings them to the happy vision and fruition of God, to the society of blessed Saints and Angels, and puts them into possession of everlasting happiness. (*Longum Calvin in*
esset enumerare omnia qua faciunt, ut mors fide- *Phil. 2. 27.*
libus potior sit vitâ & optabilior). Yet for all this, as that learned Author saith, (*Vita per se aestimata est praeclarum Dei beneficium, praesertim qui Christo vivunt, iis vitam lucro esse dicimus*); Life considered in it self is a choice mercy of God, and advantageous to the Godly: And to glorifie God in this bodily life, is, *Non parva dignatio*, no little favour which God vouchsafeth to us; so Calvin. And *Musculus* saith, (*Mors ipsa quatenus est peccati stipendium & horribilis natura in seipsâ, considerata capax est misericordia tam coram Deo quam coram hominibus*); Death as it is the wages of sin, and terrible to nature, is capable of mercy both before God and Man. Besides, as the same Author observes, there were several circumstances which would have rendered his death in a sort miserable, and no doubt did then trouble his mind, (*Desolatio videlicet & perturbatio Ecclesie*) as the too much dejection of his people at the sad news of his death, and the desolation that might follow upon it, and withal, the consideration that he could be no longer serviceable

Muscul. in
Phil. 2. 27.

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to them, and to the Apostle in his bonds which he much desired. Besides we may farther add, that the continuance of a good mans life is a great blessing in this respect, that the longer he lives, the more good he doth, and so his reward will be the greater; 2 Cor. 9. 6. *He that soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully.* These are degrees of glory, as may be gathered from 1 Cor. 3. 8. 1 Cor. 15. 41, 42. The most gracious here, shall be most glorious hereafter. Those that do most for God here, shall receive most from God hereafter. So that had *Epaphroditus* died, he had had his reward the sooner; but living, he makes it the greater. For those of the longest standing, and greatest proficiency in the School of Grace here, shall take the greatest degrees of Glory hereafter.

I end this with the words of that truly pious and learned *Divine, *Life in it self, and for the advantages of serving God, and encreasing our Crown, is a desirable thing.*

* Doctor
Hammond
in Phil.
1. 23.

Use and Application.

Use 1. 1. This may serve to confute or reprove the *Manichees*, or any others that hold this present life in it self is evil.

Heming. in Psal. 2. 27. *Manichei hanc presentem vitam ut malum, et se damnarunt.* Heming. Surely God would never have made prolongation of life a motive to obedience, (as you find Deut. 6. 2. & 30. 16, &c. so Prov. 3. 16. & 4. 10, 22. & 9. 10, 11. and

and elsewhere) nor would the Apostle here have reckoned *Epaphroditus's* recovery amongst the mercies of God, if this present life had been evil. This is such a mercy we ought to bless God for: Psal. 66. 8, 9. *O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard, who holdeth our soul in life.* — (*Nè umbrâ quidem corporis nedium vivo ac sano corpore dignus est, &c.*) He is not worthy of the shadow and shape of a body, much less of a living and healthful body, that doth not look upon life and health as mercies.

Muscul. in Psal. 103. 3, 4.

2. This consideration should make us patient *Use 2.*
under afflictions that befall us.

So long as we have life and health, we have no cause to complain as though God dealt hardly with us. We read, *Gen. 19.* that *Lot* had most of his Goods (which he had not time to remove) and his Sons in Law consumed in a fearful fire from Heaven, and his Wife turned into a Pillar of Salt before his eyes, (a sad spectacle); yet he counted it a mercy (amidst manifold miseries) that God had spared his life. *Verf. 19. Behold, now thy Servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life.* — It is a mercy thou hast thy health, but if this be gone after loss of Goods and Children, as in *Job's* case, yet it is a mercy thy life is spared, that thou art on this side the Grave, and a sad eternity; *Lam. 3. 22, 23. It is of the Lords mercies that we are not consumed, because*

his compassions fail not: they are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. Therefore as he adds, vers. 39. *Wherefore doth a living man complain?* A living man hath cause to be thankful, but none to murmur, life and health being the choicest of outward mercies.

3. and last
Use.

3. And lastly, *Let us not*, if life and health be such choice mercies, *provoke God to deprive us of them.*

Sin (as I told you before) is the procuring cause of sickness, yea, and of death too, *Rom. 5. 12.* so *Rom. 6. 23.* Death both Temporal and Eternal, is as due to sin, as wages to him that earns them. Temporal Death, 'tis true, sooner or later will seize on us all; yet many by sinning impair their health, and shorten their dayes, as these places shew, *Job 15. 32.* *Psal. 94. 23.* *Prov. 10. 27.* *Eccles. 7. 17.*

But more particularly I shall name several sins, some of which, in their own nature, tend to impairing of health, and shortening a mans dayes; and others of them God hath threatened with destruction: I pray you observe them, and learn to avoid them, as you love prolongation of health and life.

1. Disobedience to Superiours.

See *Exod. 20. 12.* This fifth Commandement of honouring thy Father and Mother, is said to be the first Commandement with promise *Ephes. 6. 2.* It is the first Commandement that

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that hath this special promise annexed to it, viz. Prolongation of dayes. By Father and Mother, we understand Political, Ecclesiastical, and Natural Parents. Take heed then of an irreverent and disobedient carriage towards the King, and those that are in authority under him. You read, *Numb. 16.* of the rebellion of *Corah*, and how the Earth opened her mouth and swallowed him up and his Company; *vers. 32, 33.* So rebellious *Absalom* came to an untimely death; and *David* was much moved with grief in that he died in rebellion, *2 Sam. 18. 9, 33,* compared. See *Prov. 16. 14.* *The wrath of a King is as Messengers of Death; but a wise man will pacifie it:* and it follows, *vers. 15.* *In the light of the Kings countenance is life.* Be not disobedient and irreverent in your carriage towards Ministers which are your Spiritual Parents. You may read, *2 King. 2. 23, 24.* Two She Bears destroyed forty two Children for mocking the Prophet. Though Children, yet God would not bear it in them. Possibly (as some think, because there were so many gathered together) they were set on by their Idolatrous Parents to do what they did, and therefore God justly punished them with the loss of their Children. Lastly, Be not disobedient to Natural Parents. God may justly deprive them of natural life, that are without natural affection. *Prov. 30. 17.* *The Son that mocketh at his Father, and despiseth to obey his Mother, the Ravens of the Valley shall pick it out, and the young Eagles shall eat it.* *Homer*, though commonly reported to

Prov. 20.

25.

Mar. 7. 20.

he blind, yet saw and observed as much: speaking of one that did not relieve his Parents, he tells us, he lived but a short time.

Οὐδὲ τοκεῖσι,
Θρεῖν φίλοις ἀπέδωκε, μινυθάδιος δὲ οἱ ἄνθρωποι
ἔπλετο. ——— Iliad. Δ.

Take heed then of disobedience to Magistrates, Ministers, or Natural Parents, as you love your lives.

2. Take heed of lustful uncleanness.

Sodom and Gomorrha, and the Cities about them, burnt strongly in lust, *Jude* 7. and God sent a strange fire to destroy them from off the face of the Earth, *Gen.* 19. 24, 25. So God cut off *Onan* for his filthiness, *Gen.* 38. 9, 10. So *1 Cor.* 10. 8. you read how that for uncleanness there fell in one day three and twenty thousand. *Pliny* tells us of *Cornelius Gallus*, *Plin Nat. Hist. lib. 7.* and *T. Aethiops*, two great persons in *Rome*, that died in the act of unchastity. The *Days* of lust are very dangerous. Indeed this sin consumes the radical moisture, and so in its own nature tends to weakness and sickness, and the shortening of a mans dayes. The wise Man tells you, *The Harlots house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead*, *Prov.* 2. 18. So likewise *Prov.* 5. 9, 11. & *Prov.* 6. 26, 27, 34, 35. & *Prov.* 7. 22, 23. & *Prov.* 31. 3. *Solomons* Mother there adviseth him not to give his strength unto Women.

3. Take

3. Take heed of intemperance in eating and drinking.

This is as a Knife to cut our own Throats; see Prov. 23. 1, 2. *When thou sittest to eat with a Ruler, (a Magistrate, or some great Man) consider diligently what is before thee; and put a Knife to thy Throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.* Some read it, *impones cultellum gutturi tuo*: and then the sence is this, thou dost as good as put a Knife to thy Throat, if thou be a man given to appetite, thou mayest endanger thy life if thou feedest too plentifully. So vers. 29, 30. *Who hath wo? who hath sorrow? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the Wine. — Our own luxuries (as one saith) fill us full of Diseases, which shorten this our short day of life, and set our Clock forward, that it striketh dead before the time of our natural circle is gone about.* Deinde cogitemus, saith Musculus, *quæ sit illorum vasa, qui per gulam & intemperantiam seipsos dona sanitatis privant, & variis morbis obnoxios reddunt.* We may say of fasting and feasting, as the Women sang of Saul and David, 1 Sam. 18. 7. *Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands: feasting kills more ten to one than fasting.* Poor people who have the shortest meals, have commonly the longest graces, and the best health. The Glutton digs his Grave with his own teeth; the Drunkard drinks healths so long to others, that he hath none to himself;

Musculus
in Pl. 6. 2.

Non

Non est in potu vera salute salus.

And it is but just with God to strike him dead, that makes himself dead drunk. Take heed then of this sin, it is good advice at all times, but most seasonable at this time, which is a time of much feasting.

οὐδ' ὑγιείης τῆς περὶ σῶμ' ἀμείλειαν ἔχειν χρὴ
Ἀλλὰ ποτὶς τε μέτρον καὶ σιτὶς γυμνασίῳ ἔ
Ποιεῖσθαι. *Pythag. Aurea Carmina.*

We ought (saith an Heathen) to have a care of our bodily health, and to observe a mean in drinking, dyet, and recreation.

4. Take heed of immoderate sorrow.

This like an heavy burthen breaks a man, and makes him stoop. Prov. 12. 25. *Heaviness in the heart of man makes it stoop.* So Prov. 13. 13. *A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance; but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.* David tells us, *Psal. 31. 10. My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing.* And the Apostle saith, *2 Cor. 7. 10. The sorrow of the World worketh death.* Immoderate sorrow for loss of worldly things, weakeneth the body, and hasteneth death.

5. Take

5. Take heed of impatience, passion, and discontent.

The murmuring Israelites were destroyed of the destroyer. 1 Cor. 10. 10. An impatient man is, *ἐκ τὸν ὀργισμὸν*, his own scourge. We say truly, the *hasty man never wants wo.* Pet-
tish, fretful, passionate persons, like the Demo-
niack in the Gospel, Mar. 5. 2, 3. wound and
cut themselves. Wrath is compared to fire in
Scripture, Gen. 39. 19, 20. Esth. 1. 12.

— *Est intus flamma medullas.*

This fire of passion devours and consumes that
which should maintain natural life. The passi-
onate man, like Mount *Aetna*, consumes his
own bowels with inward burnings. Thus as
Eliphaz tells *Job*, Job 5. 2. *Wrath killeth the
foolish man.* Vexing and fretting under pro-
vidential dispensations; spends a mans spirits,
and puts him upon taking such unlawful courses
as are oft-times attended with destruction.
Prov. 19. 19. *A man of great wrath shall suffer
punishment; for if thou deliver him, yet thou
must do it again.* q. d. A passionate man is no
sooner delivered from one danger, but he brings
himself into another.

6. Take heed of Envy.

Job 5. 2. *Envy slayeth the silly one.* If a
man be so silly as to hug this Viper in his bosom,
he

he doth it to his destruction. Envy, like a Moth, doth insensibly consume a man, depriving him of health, and the comforts of this life. Hence the wise Man calls *envy the rottenness of the bones*, Prov. 14. 30. The envious man melts away at the prosperity of others, as you may see *Psal. 112. 10.*

Invidius alterius rebus macrescit opimis.

The Dart of Envy is (as a worthy Divine observes) like that in *Homer*.
Dr. Pierce in Sinner impleaded.

— 'Ανεγναμ'φθι δέ οἱ αἰχμή
 Ἀσπίδι ἐν κρατερῇ. *Iliad. γ. v. 348.*
Reflexa est ei cuspis

Scuto in valido. —

It alway recoyls into the breast of him that throw it, and mischieves most at rebound.

7. Take heed of pride and ambition.

Prov. 16. 28. *Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.* Aspiring *Abshalom* soon expired; so did ambitious *Adonijah*. Proud *Haman* had a sudden downfall, like the Toad in the Fable, he swell'd till he burst. *Herod* when he took that glory to himself which was due to God, he was *σκολοβωτός*, eaten up of Worms, *Acts 12. 23.*

8. Take

8. Take heed of *blood-shed and murder.*

See *Psal. 55. 23. Bloody and deceitful men,* i. e. say some, deceitful murderers (that lie in wait privily for blood, see *Prov. 1. 10, to 20.*) that can speak fair and seek your ruine, these shall not live out half their dayes, they shall be suddenly cut off and come to some fearful end: But whether blood-suckers do it by secret conspiracy, or by open violence, God hath threatened them with death. So *Psal. 140. 11. Evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him.* So *Gen. 9. 6. Whoso sheddeth mans blood, by man shall his blood be shed.* The Sword of Justice is especially committed to the hand of Magistrates to cut off such offenders, *Rom. 13. 4.* To this Head I may refer your Duellists, who for trifles challenge the field. If you be assaulted, you may justly defend your self, but to agree upon a bargain of blood-shed, (to use Bishop Hall's expression) is wicked and damnable: And though both should come fairly off, yet the very intention to kill, is murder, saith that worthy Bishop. To end this, *Prov. 28. 17. A man that doth violence to the blood of any man, shall flee to the Pit, let no man stay him, or endeavour his rescue.*

Bp. Hall
in Decad.
2. case.

9. Take heed of *deceit and fraud.*

See that forementioned place, *Prov. 55. 23.* I think we may safely make them two distinct Offenders; and deceitful men, as well as the blood-

Mal. 3.
8, 9.

Chrysost.
in Acts.
Rom. 12.

blood-thirsty, shall not long prosper. The same Greek word βίος that signifies life, signifies likewise livelyhood, (1 John 3. 17.) and it is a grievous sin to cheat another out of his livelyhood, as well as to take away anothers life: 1 Thess. 4. 6. *That no man go beyond and defraud his Brother in any matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such; as we also have forewarned you, and testified.* But the worst piece of theft or fraud, is that *Pia fraud*, to take away, or alienate that which is given to pious uses; as to the relief of Ministers or poor People; Prov. 20. 25. *It is a snare, i. e. destruction to the man who devoureth that which is holy, i. e. Takes that to his own use, which was appointed to God's.* Achans sin in stealing the Babylonish Garment, and the two hundred Shekels of Silver, and the Wedg of Gold, (Josh. 7. 21.) was sacrifice as well as theft; for God had reserved the spoils of Jericho for his own Treasury, Josh. 6. 18, 19. and you see it cost him his life, Josh. 7. 25. You read, Acts 5. beginning, *Ananias* there sells a Possession, which he had devoted to the Churches use, and kept back a part of the price; and in this, as *Chrysostome* saith, he was κλέπτης ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις φ' ἑαυτοῦ, taken stealing his own Goods, and for this struck dead. Now if he that takes away from the Church but a little of that which was once his own, be so severely punished, how severely will divine Justice pursue those who by fraud and violence take away the possessions wherewith other men have endowed the Church: So *Sapphira* his Wife agreeing with him

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him in this ungodly act, was struck dead immediately after her Husband, as you read *vers.* 10. These two, by their lying and fraudulent dealing, are said to tempt the Spirit of the Lord, *vers.* 9. You fraudulent Trades-men, that say your Commodities cost you so much, and you cannot afford them under such a rate, (and you have your Wives at your elbows ready to back you in what you say) what do you by thus lying and sinning against your Consciences, but even presumptuously tempt the Spirit of the Lord, to try whether he will be just or no? Remember *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, having lyed to God, and dealt fraudulently, sunk down, being stark dead. Deal fairly then above-board (as we say) lest God strike you dead beside the Counter.

10. Take heed of *covetousness* or *worldly-mindedness*.

Great and earnest care for the things of this life, is called *μειραυα*, which signifies heart-dividing, and heart-distracting care, (*Matth.* 6. 25. *Phil.* 4. 6.) excessive care for the things of this life, spends a mans spirits.

Cura facit canos, quamvis homo non habet annos.

See *1 Tim.* 6. 9, 10. The wise Man tells us, *He that hateth covetousness, shall prolong his days,* *Prov.* 28. 16. but covetousness may provoke God to shorten them. *Gebezi* by his covetousness provoked God to plague him with
the

the Leprosie, 2 King. 5. 27. *Take heed then as Christ saith, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged, as with surfeiting and drunkenness, so with the cares of this life, Luk. 21. 34.*

*Beluculo
furgere
saluberri-
mum est.*

11. Take heed of Idleness.

Labour in an honest Calling, provided it be moderate, (*Ad ruborem non ad sudorem*) is most healthful. Prov. 10. 16. *The labour of the Righteous tends to life.* Moderate exercise preserves health, but a sedentary idle life, subjects a man to diseases. Prov. 21. 29. *The desire of the sloathful kills him, for his hands refuse to labour.* That which the slothful man desires, which is his ease and rest, layes his soul open to temptations, and his body to diseases; as standing Waters most putrifie. *Ἐν τῇς παύσει καὶ ἡ κακία.* Chrysost. Of idleness comes no goodness, therefore take heed of it.

*Optimum est
vivere ho-
minis se-
pultura.
Sen.*

12. Take heed of unworthy receiving the Sacrament.

See 1 Cor. 11. 29. For this cause, viz. for want of due preparation when they came to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, God sent a fearful sickness amongst them, whereof some were then weak, others sick, and many fallen asleep, that is, taken away by temporal death. This Sacrament, (which to the worthy communicant is *φάρμακον τῆς ἀθανασίας*, a wholesome potion of immortality) to the wicked impenitent wretch (through an ill disposition in him)

turns

turns to the bane and ruine (except speedy repentance step in) both of soul and body. I gave you notice this morning, that your Minister purposeth the next Lord's Day, through God's assistance, to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; be exhorted to fit and prepare your selves, *elic by receiaing the same unworthily, you become guilty of the Body and Blood of Christ your Saviour. You eat and drink your own damnation, not considering the Lords Body: You kindle Gods wrath against you; you provoke him to plague you with diuers Diseases, and sundry kinds of death.* See Exhortation at the Celebration of the Communion.

13. Take heed of rejoycing at the calamity of others.

Prov. 17. 5. *He that mocketh the poor, reproacheth his Maker; and he that is glad at calamities, shall not go unpunished.* So Prov. 24. 17, 18. *Rejoyce not when thine Enemy falleth; and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth, lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his wrath from him, and lay it upon thee.* See Obad. 12. 13, 14, 15. God threateneth the Edomites for rejoycing at the calamity that befel the Israelites. This sin call'd *εὐχάριστος*, was condemned by the Heathens. It is most opposite to the rule of charity, which *rejoyceth not in iniquity*, 1 Cor. 13. 6. It maketh not others evil, be it of sin or suffering, matter of rejoycing.

14. Take

14. Take heed of *innovating in God's Worship.*

Nadab and Abihu for offering strange fire, by fire from the Lord, as with lightning, were destroyed, as you may read *Levit. 10. 1, 2.*

15. Take heed of *invading the Ministers Office without a Call.*

See *Numb. 16. 35.* You read there of two hundred and fifty men that offered Incense, usurping the Priests Office, were punished by fire, wherein they offended. So *Uzziah's* rash adventure to do the like, was punished with the Leprosie, as you read *2 Chron. 26. 16, &c.*

16. Lastly, Take heed of *sins of the tongue*, as Lying, Swearing, Forswearing, Curling, False-accusing, Backbiting, Brawling, Blasphemy, &c.

See *Prov. 17. 20.* He that hath a pervers tongue, falleth into mischief. And *Prov. 13. 3.* He that keepeth his mouth, keepeth his life; but he that openeth wide his lips, shall have destruction. So *Prov. 18. 21.* Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and they that love it, shall eat the fruit thereof. The Psalmists words shall shew up this Point; *Psal. 34. 12, 13, 14.* What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many dayes, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue

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51

tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking
guile. Depart from evil, and do good: seek
peace and ensue it.

I might add to these sins which endanger health and life, bold and audacious attempts, as *leaping Hedges, swimming Waters, &c.* when there is no necessity for either. This is called properly a tempting of God, when men, without any warrant from God's Word, make tryal of his Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, which is expressly forbidden, *Deut. 6. 16. Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted him in Massah*: whereof you read, *Exod. 17. 2.* where they are said to tempt God by requiring a miraculous evidence of his presence among them. Our Saviour did beat back the Devil with this Text out of *Deuteronomy*, when he would have had him to cast down himself from the * *Pinacle, i. e. out-wing or battlement of the Temple, Mat. 4. 7.* If Christ had cast himself down into a needless danger, God might have justly left him to destruction, without breach of his Promise. God indeed hath promised to keep us, but it must be in all our wayes; *Psal. 91. 11.* (which necessary part of the Sentence the Devil left out, *Mat. 4. 8.*) God hath promised to keep us in all our wayes, or warrantable courses, but not in our wanderings. The *Israelites* fell in the Wilderness when they tempted God, *1 Cor. 10. 9.*

Doctor
Hammond
Annot. on
Mat. 4. 5.

Object. But some may say, Are not they
D 2 that

Epaphroditus's recovery.

that tempt God delivered? *Mal. 3. 15.* Do not we daily see many wicked men that are disobedient to Superiours, drunkards, lustful, impatient, envious, ambitious, &c. live, become old, and are mighty in power; yea, and the Rod of God is not upon them? *Job 21. 7, 9.* Did not the Psalmist see, such were not in trouble like other men, nor plagued like other men, that made conscience of their wayes? *Psal. 73. 5.*

Ans. Indeed it may so fall out, that a wicked man may prolong his life in his wickedness, *Eccles. 7. 15.* God may bear long with some such notorious offenders, to shew his own patience and long suffering, to exercise the faith and patience of his Servants. To teach that there is a day of judgment, wherein he hath appointed to judge the World in Righteousness, *Acts 17. 31.* God may bear with them to leave them inexcusable, that they may fill up the measure of their sins, and for their greater damnation at last, *Rom. 9. 22.* For these and other reasons best known unto himself, he may suffer some wicked men to live and prosper: But let not us let loose the reins to sin, and make the impunity of some few an encouragement to wickedness. It is folly and madness to be careless, because some few have escaped shipwrack. Certainly, as the Apostle saith, after he had told us of several punishments befalling several Offenders for several sins, *1 Cor. 10. 11.* Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends
of

Epaphroditus's Treachery.

53

of the World are come. And as an Heathen
(Author said) N. —

Felix quærens faciunt aliena pericula cautum.

Happy is he whom other mens harms do make
to beware.

Well then, life being so great a mercy, let
us avoid all such sins as may be a means to shor-
ten it; and let us use all lawful means to pre-
serve it, as Food and Physick which God hath
appointed. Let us not, through discouragement
of Spirit because of deadly dangers which
we meet with in our Christian Callings, as wea-
ry of life, wish for death, which was an infir-
mity in that good Man *Elijah*, *1 King. 19. 4.*
Much less ought we through discontent (as *Jo-
nah* did, *Jonah 4. 3, 8.*) wish for death. But
most prodigiously to blame are they that lay
violent hands upon themselves.

Numb. 16.
14, 15.

Man's breath (saith a worthy Bishop) *is put into his body as*
a Tenant at Will into an house, whereinto it may
not enter without the good will of the Land-lord;
and being once in, it must keep there and hold the
building upright, till it have its discharge to re-
move somewhere else.

Dr. Abbot
on *Jonah*
4. 3, 4.
Lev. 26.
p. 543.

Yet after all this that I have spoken con-
cerning the care you should have to maintain health
and preserve life: Give me leave to put in a
Caveat or cautionary Proposition to prevent a
mistake: And it is this, *That you ought to ha-*
veard health and life for the Churches sake, and

Caution.

Epaphroditus's recovery.

for Christ's sake, (to witness to his Truth) if called to it. 1 John 3. 16. — We ought to lay down our lives for the Brethren. St. Paul was willing to spend and be spent, 2 Cor. 12. 15. for the propagation of the Gospel, and good of God's Church and People; see Acts 20. 24. and 21. 13. Truth hath been sealed with the blood of many Martyrs. An Heathen set such a price on Truth, that he thought it worth our lives.

—— *Vitamque impendere vero
Nec propter vitam, vivendi pendere causam.*

What saith the Apostle of Epaphroditus, see Phil. 2. 30. For the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life to supply your lack of service towards me. Epaphroditus undertook a great Journey to minister to Paul's necessity, which is here called the Work of Christ; (for what is done to his Members, he takes it as done to himself, Mat. 25. 40.). This Journey occasioned his sickness; but Epaphroditus did not regard his life to supply the Philippians lack of service towards Paul. παραβουλεύων τὴν ψυχὴν. (*παράβουλεύων* significat *perperam consulere, uti faciunt qui se in apertum vitae periculum conjiciunt.*) Epaphroditus was willing to hazard health and life to supply St. Paul's wants. And as Hemingius saith, (*Hoc facere in loco pro Christo non est stultitia aut imprudentia sed vere celestis sapientia, &c.*) Thus to hazard life is not folly, but true wisdom. And as Musculinus

Hemingius in
Phil. 2. 30.

Epaphroditus's recovery.

55

*culus saith of Epaphroditus's sickness, (Id omni-
um erat optimum quod in tam pio & vere Chri-
stiano opere incidit in hunc morbum: beati sunt
qui hoc moris genere auferuntur ex hoc saeculo.)*
It was best of all that he fell sick in so good a
work: and happy are all they that die thus in
the Work of the Lord, *Rev. 14. 13.*

*Muscul. in
Phil. 2. 27.*

I end this point with that of our Saviour,
John 12. 25. He that loveth his (*more then
is sitting, more then Christ, his Church, or
Truth) *shall lose it,* (in another World); *but*
he that hateth his life in this World, loving it
less (for that's the hatred here meant, *Gen. 29.*
31.) *then the Truth and Church of Christ,*
shall keep it unto life eternal.

* *αγαπά*
τὸ θεόν.
Chryso.
Rom. 66.
Luk. 14. 26.

So much for this time.

D 4

Epaphroditus

Epaphroditus's Recovery.

Third Sermon.

PHIL: 2. 27.

— but God had mercy on him. —

Dearly Beloved,



Handled in the morning a Doctrine implied, which was this, That *life and health are mercies* : And in handling that Point, as a Divine; (though *Theologorum minimus*) I shewed you *Viam rectam ad vitam longam*, the true way to health and long life according to the Scriptures. I shall not trouble you with repetition of what I then delivered, because I have much matter before me, and I would willingly finish this Text at this time.

Epaphroditus's recovery.

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I come then to the last and chief Point these words import, which is this,

That God doth sometimes graciously recover, or mercifully restore his People, though they be grievously visited with sickness.

That God that knockt off *Peters Chains*, and released him from Prison, brought forth this *Epaphroditus*, who like a Prisoner was confined to a sick Bed, with few Attendants about him.

That God that ruleth the raging of the Sea, and stills the Waves thereof when they arise, as it is *Job 38*;

is *Psal. 89. 9.* put a stop in his due time to the fury of his Distemper. We read of *Dr. Willet*, that ἐμψυχὸς βιβλιοθήκη, that in his Journey from *London*, he was forced to take up his lodging at *Hodsdon* in *Hertfordshire*, having by a fall from his Horse, broken his right Leg;

there being sick, he continued God's Prisoner about nine dayes together, and died. It pleased God, (as my * Author speaks) who hath appointed to every man ἰδίῳ θανάτῳ καὶ ὁρίῳ τελευτῇ ἀποθνήσκειν, his own proper and peculiar kind of death, and without whose providence not a Leaf falls from the Tree, so to dispose of this Godly mans death, that as a Pilgrim here on earth, he must die in an Inn: He was carried thence by *Epach* to his Town of *Barley*, where he was Preacher, and there buried: He fell sick not far from home, yet recovered not to go alive thither. But *Epaphroditus*, who fell sick at *Rome* above six hundred miles from *Philippi*, through God's mercy was restored to health,

* *Abel Reed*
divinum in
life of *Dr.*
Willet

Epaphroditus's recovery.

health; and returned to his People, who were not a little comforted at the sight of him.

Now that God doth sometimes deliver his, when nigh unto death, is clear; 1. From Scripture Texts; see 1 Sam. 26. so Deut. 32. 39. so Job 5. 18, 19. Eliphaz speaking of God, saith, *He maketh sore, and bindeth up, he woundeth, and his bands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.* So saith David, Psalm 34. 19. *Many are the afflictions of the Righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.* So Psal. 68. 20. *He that is our God, is the God of Salvation;* according to the Original it is *Salvations*, in the plural Number, because he delivers several wayes, and at several times; and is the God of all manner of Salvation, Temporal, Spiritual, and Eternal; and then it follows, ** Unto God the Lord belong the issues from death:* in most deadly dangers he oft-times sends in help. 2. The Point is clear by Scripture-Examples. God recovered *Hezekiah* who was deadly sick, 1 King. 20. 1. 5. So he did *Job*, yea and *David* oft, insomuch that he describes God by this Periphrasis, Psalm 9. 13. *Thou that liftest me up from the gates of death:* That is, from the power of death. (E. portis mortis, i. e. a potestate mortis, sumis tor enim porta in Scripturis pro magistratu & potestate, quod in portis solent exerceri judicia, Muscul. in loc.). So Psal. 116. 6. *I was brought low and he helped me.* So God delivered *Paul* from deadly dangers, as you may gather from

mywib
Adsalutes
Bythner.

* mnyin
Exitus, i. e.
Domini est
educere a
morte.
Bythner.
in locum.

Muscul. in
Psal. 9. 13.

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2 Cor. x. 8, 9, 10. Thus it was with Epaphroditus in my Text, who being sick, nigh unto death, the Lord had mercy on him. (Significat quod attinebat naturæ vires actum fuisse de vitâ illius, idcirco quod sanitati restitutus erat, singulari fuisse ope ac virtute Dei factum. Muscul.) Many thousands in this Nation, who have been sick even unto death, both in the apprehension of themselves and others, have been raised up again by God, as so many Acts and Monuments of his mercy.

Muscul in
Phil 2. 27.
Ubi hu-
manum
deficit ibi
incipit di-
vinum
auxilium

I therefore cease any farther proof of this known Point, and shall proceed to give you the reasons of it. And here, for your profit, I will take the Proposition into two parts, and accordingly to each give in the Reasons of the Point, and then I shall put them together again, and make application of the whole.

The first part is this, *God is the Deliverer of his People*: And the chief Reasons why he doth deliver them, I conceive to be these three.

I. *Because he is related to them, and they to him.*

He is their Husband, Head, King, Master, Father, &c. and they are his peculiar People, his Spouse, Members, Subjects, Servants, Children, and what not, that speaks them a People near and dear unto him. Surely then, as Samuel said, 1 Sam. 12. 22. *The Lord will not forsake his People for his great Names sake*;

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sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his People.

2. Because of his Promises of deliverance which he hath made to them.

See Psal. 41. 3. Psal. 50. 15. Isa. 41. 10. 1 Cor. 10. 13. These are precious Promises, 2 Pet. 1. 4. which God hath given to his People, and in Christ they are yea and Amen, 2 Cor. 1. 20. that is, They are certain things, and shall be effected in his due time; if God see that the accomplishment of them make for his Glory and his Peoples good. Psalm. 84. 11. For he is faithful that hath promised, Heb. 10. 23.

3. And lastly, Because he would have his People delivered to praise him.

See Psal. 50. 15. Call upon me (saith God) in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie me. God delivers them that they might glorifie him with their lips and with their lives. Of which you shall hear more hereafter.

The second part is this, God suffers his People to be very sick before he hath mercy on them, or sends in deliverance. And this I conceive he doth likewise for three Reasons.

1. Because God is delighted with his Peoples Prayers, he loves to hear often from them.

And they pray most frequently and fervently when they are in greatest danger, and outward means seem to fail. So the Church, Psal. 108. 12. *Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man.* So the Disciples came to Christ in a great tempest, and awoke him, saying, *Lord save us, we perish,* Matth. 8. 24, 25. So we read, *Acts 12. 5.* how Prayer was made, without ceasing, of the Church unto God for Peter when in most deadly danger. Christ saith to the Spouse, *Cant. 2. 14. — Let me hear thy Voice, for sweet is thy Voice.* Their Voice is sweet at all times, but as Musick, it is most pleasant, proceeding from persons upon the Waters of affliction. *God loves (as one saith) to see his People in a praying posture, and to hear them in a weeping tune,* Jer. 31. 9. As therefore we deal with Musicians, deferring their pay, that they may play the more: So God deals with his People, (*sic parvis componere magna—*) deferring their deliverance, that they may pray the more earnestly unto him.

2. Because by this means deliverance will be more prized when it comes.

We usually say, *Lightly come, lightly go,* That which is soon got, is soon forgot, *δύσκολον κτ*

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Τὰ καλὰ, difficilia quæ pulchra, Things got with difficulty are most prized. How welcome was Isaac to Abraham and Sarah! Jacob and Esau, to Isaac and Rebekah! Joseph to Jacob and Rachel! Samuel to Hannah! How were these Children prized by their Parents, whom God gave to them after abundance of prayer and waiting? How welcome was the Dove to Noah when she returned with an Olive Leaf in her mouth, in token that the Waters were abated, which thing he desired to see, *Gen. 8. 8, 11.* So David said of the Sword of Goliath, *1 Sam. 21. 9. There is none like that*, because it was got with difficulty, and might serve to mind him of God's gracious assistance, and to encourage his Faith in the like future dangers. So *Psal. 126.* we find the Church joyfully celebrating their incredible return out of captivity. This deliverance out of sickness is most prized, when it is a fruit of Prayer, and unexpectedly comes in when all hopes of recovery seem to fail.

3. And lastly, Because by this means God gets most glory.

Zelatur Deus propter gloriam; God will not part with his Glory; This he will not give to another. He therefore helps not many times till persons be deadly sick, that so they might see, *Digitum Dei*, the Finger of God in their deliverance, and give him the sole praise of all; As Christ said of Lazarus's sickness, It was for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified.

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glorified thereby, John II. 4. As Aquinas *Aquin. in Phil. 2. 27.* said here of Epaphroditus's sickness, *Erat supra iudicium medicorum, non autem supra providentiam divinam, sed ad honorem Dei.* Gods glory appeareth in recovering him, whom Physicians and Friends have given over for a dead man. God at such a time of extremity hath an opportunity of shewing forth those three great Attributes, (which are as Pearls of his Crown) Wisdom, Power, and Goodness. It is called the *Veil of Christs flesh*, Heb. 10. 20. For as the Veil of the Temple did hide the Holy of Holies, so Christs humane Nature did hide and obscure the Glory of the Divine, so that but little in comparison appeared. Truly my Beloved, in a deliverance where there is much of flesh or humane assistance, there is but little Divine Glory taken notice of: but when humane helps fail, then Gods Glory is most seen in a deliverance.

To shut up this, as the Limner layes the Foundation of every curious Picture in dark Ground-work to set it off: So God layes the Ground-work of a merciful deliverance in sad distresses, that his glory may the more appear.

Having thus taken the parts asunder, I should put them together again (according to my promise) and make some application of the whole: which I intend to do, but give me leave first to answer a Scruple or Question which may hence arise, and here most fitly receive an answer.

Quest.

Quest. Why did not the Apostle cure Epaphroditus, seeing he had the gift of Miracles as well as others? Mat. 10. 8. Do we not read how he cured a Cripple from his Mothers Womb, Acts 14. 8. How he cast out a spirit of Divination, Acts 16. 16. How he restored to life Eutychus, who falling asleep, as Paul was long preaching, fell down dead from the third Loft, (which Example should awaken all Church-sleepers): So we read he cured the Father of Publius, who lay sick of a Fever and Bloody-flux; and many that were in the Island came and were healed by him, Acts 28. 8, 9. Why did he not then cure Epaphroditus, whom he so dearly affected, and whose recovery he so much desired?

Ans. The Apostles could not heal the sick, *Piscat.* in or work Miracles (as *Piscator* saith, *Propria Phil. 2. 27. virtute ac pro suo arbitrio*) by their own power, and at their own pleasure: but only when there was a necessity for Conversion or Conviction of Unbelievers, then onely the Holy-Ghost enabled them to do it, see *Acts* 3. 12. so *Acts* 9. *Act. 4. 4.* 41, 42. Peter's restoring Dorcas to life, (as well as healing the Cripple) converted many to the Faith. Paul though sometimes he wrought Miracles, yet he was not the Author, but Instrument in the Miracles he wrought, acting onely when, how, where, and on whom the Spirit of God pleased. Paul could not cure Epaphroditus, no nor Trophimus, 2 Tim. 4. 20. nor Timothy

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Timothy neither; but onely *Consilio medicina*, saith *Aquinas*, per quod datur intelligi quod non ad omnes utebatur miraculis sed quando expediebat propter fidem. The reason then why the Apostle did not miraculously cure his beloved *Epaphroditus*, was because he could not, the Holy-Ghost not exciting him thereto.

Aquinas
in 1 Tim.
5. 23.

Use and Application.

1. By way of comfort.

Use 1.

This Text affords abundance of comfort to several persons in several cases.

1. *This Consideration affords comfort to God's Servants under sickness and deadly dangers.* See that former-quoted place, *Psal. 68. 20. He that is our God, is the God of Salvation; and to God the Lord belongs the issues from death.* This God, whom the Righteous are related to, and have an interest in, can help in greatest straits, and send in deliverance when they are nigh unto death, and stand in most need of help. That God that kept *Moses's* Bush burning, yet it was not consumed, *Exod. 3. 2.* and preserved *Noah's* Ark upon the Waters from perishing in the Waters, This God can preserve his People under sickness and their saddest tryals, and in his due time give them an happy issue out of all afflictions. See what the *Psal-*mist saith, *Psal. 73. 26. My flesh and my heart*
E *faileth;*

faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, (or according to Orig. *The Rock of my heart*; or according to Septuag. *ὁ θεὸς τῆς καρδίας μου*, *The God of mine heart*) and my portion for ever. When the Godly Man's flesh fails, health declines, strength is weakned, then is God ready to support him under sickness, and to ease him of his pains, either by restoring him to health, or by taking him out of the miseries of this sinful World by death. So that if we belong to God, *telling in as Bullinger saith, (Optimè nobiscum agitur, sal. 2. 27. sive revalescamus sive moriamur)* it will go well with us, whether we live or die.

2. This Consideration affords comfort, not only to believers 'midst personal sickness, but likewise to God's Church 'midst national calamities. Though Church and State lie as it were bed-rid, languishing unto Death under Schism and Division, Sin and Errour, and other national Calamities: Yet let us not despair of help, for he that cured Epaphroditus here, who was sick nigh unto death, can help us even in this extremity. See Ezek. 37. 11, 12, 13. God like a skilful Bone-setter or Chyrurgeon can bind up the breach of his People, and heal the stroak of their Wound, as the expression is, Isa. 30. 26. God hath promised to heal, in case we return unto him by prayer and unfeigned repentance, Isa. 19. 22. so Jer. 33. 6. None indeed can heal us but he, Hos. 5. 13. All others, except God be of the *Quorum*, are Physicians of no value; Let us then, as it is Hos. 6. 1. Come and

and return unto the Lord, for he hath words, and
he will heal us: he hath smitten, and he will
bind us up.

Una eademque manus vulnus aperire facit.

3. This consideration may afford comfort to
such as are spiritually sick, and in their appre-
hensions nigh unto eternal death and destruction.
That God that raised Epaphroditus, who was
deadly sick in body, can cure thy Soul mortally
wounded with sin: Let such as are wounded in
conscience, consider this, Though your wounds
have been grievous and of a long standing, yet
they exceed not the skill and power of God, the
spiritual Physitian. God can, yea and will
cure you, if you turn to him and relie upon him,
Take my word for it. Nay it is not only mine
but God's Word, or I should be loth to speak
it in this place. See *Isa. 55. 7. Let the wicked
forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his
thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and
he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for
he will abundantly pardon.* So *Matth. 11. 28.
Come unto me (saith Christ) all ye that labour
and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Come to Christ and wellcome; he keeps open
house to all comers.*

*Ezek. 18.
27.*

4. And lastly, Gods dear People that by their
sinning have blurred their evidences for Heaven,
and fallen from some degrees of Grace and Spi-
ritual Comfort, as David did, *Psal. 51. 8, 12.*

Pl. 147.3.

Let them not despair of recovery. That God that restored Epaphroditus's sick body to its pristine health, can restore thy soul to spiritual health, peace, and comfort. Thus he dealt by David, Psal. 23. 3. *He restorath my soul.* He is the Creator of Peace and Comfort, Isa. 45. 7. *So* Isa. 42. 17, 18, 19. and hath promised in his due time, *to speak peace unto his People, and to his Saints, but let them not turn again to folly,* Psal. 85. 8. I end this with that of the Evangelical Prophet, Isa. 50. 10. *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his Servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light?* (a Child of light it seems may walk in darkness, i. e. have little or no comfort for the present, yet) *let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.* Let him still wait on God prayingly, believingly, obediently, &c. in God's due time, which is ever best, comfort will come.

And so much for this Use by way of comfort,

Use 2.

2. By way of instruction.

We learn, if God cure the body of sickness as he did Epaphroditus here, surely it is he that cures the Soul of sin, which is a far harder work. God upon the account of Christ, (who as at this time came into the World to undertake for us) heals our souls of sin, by applying Christ's perfect Righteousness to the soul, he removes the guilt; and by his blessed Spirit implanting in the soul the Seeds of Divine Grace, he heals it of the

filth

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sith of sin. Psal. 103. 3. *Who pardoneth all thine Iniquities; who healeth all thy Diseases.* God alone, that cures the body of its distempers, heals the soul of its spiritual maladies. The Scribes and Pharisees acknowledged as much, *Luke 5. 21.* The Pope cannot pardon sins. The Ministers of the Church of England absolve no otherwise then (*declarative*) as the Embassadors of Christ. God doth it (*autoritative*) the authority is wholly his. We do but pronounce the Pardon, which before we speak, is really done in Heaven to sincere Penitents,

3. And lastly; *By way of Exhortation.*

3. and last Use.

1. To all in general; Let us be exhorted to go to God for help in time of sickness. It was he that cured *Epaphroditus* when *sick nigh unto death*. Too too blame are they who in sickness and such like straits consult Astrologers, Witches, Devils, and I know not whom for help. It was an inexcusable sin in *Abaziah* King of *Israel*, who in his sickness sought to *Baalzebub* the Godd of *Ekron* for recovery of his health; and for so doing, God threatened him (and accordingly brought it to pass) that he *should not come down from his sick-bed, but should surely die*. Read the passage in *2 King. 1. 2, &c.* What good got *Saul* by consulting the Witch of *Endor*? Surely the Wounds of God are rather to be chosen than the Devils Plaisters. Indeed their best cures are deadly wounds: For

*Habes hoc
loco qui
omnes de-
pellit
morbos.
Bul. in
Phil. 2. 27.*

if the mortal body should be restored by such unlawful means; yet the immortal soul, which is the far better part, is thereby much endangered. O do not go about indirectly to win your selves out of trouble; you have a God to repair unto, who can help at all straits, and at every turn; your head cannot ake without his leave, nor leave aking without his help.

Quest. But what, would you have us to use no outward means, to take no Medicines, to consult no Physicians?

Ans. Not so, I would have lawful means to be used, Physicians to be consulted and that betimes, before Distempers become inveterate, and so scorn the vertue of soveraign Drugs.

*Ovid.
Principiis
obsta.*

Pharmaca nascenti sunt adhibenda malo.

Our Saviour saith, *Mat. 9. 12. The whole need not the Physician, but they that are sick.* The sick then do need him, and ought to seek unto him. So we read *Luke 8. 43.* of a woman that had an issue of blood twelve years, and had spent all her Living upon Physicians, neither could be healed of any. Yet our Saviour did not blame her for seeking to them for help, nor the Physicians for taking their Fees, though they did her no good, for she rather grew worse, saith another Evangelist, *Mark 5. 26.* Yet considering that life is so great a mercy (as you heard in the morning) methinks Physicians should not

not be too exacting, but do something for the poorer sort of people for charity-sake, and for conscience-sake. (I hope Physicians will pardon me this short digression, for I am pleading for them). *Asa* is not blamed for seeking unto Physicians, but because he sought to them chiefly, neglecting God, *2 Chron. 16. 12.* And in the very next verse you read of his death, *vers. 13.* Means never help without God, *Jer. 46. 11.* nor doth God now-adayes usually help without means. God requires we should use means, as a learned * Divine saith, *Ex indulgentiâ non ex indigentia*, To honour us, not to help him. The same reasons which moved God to make the Creatures, move him still to use them; not necessity and want of power, but love and goodness.

Mr. Corbet
in Serm.
on 1 Cor.
1. 27.

Object. 1. *If God have decreed I shall recover, I shall recover, though I use no means.*

Ans. *Non sequitur.* It doth not follow, that if God have decreed you shall recover, you shall recover without using means. You may as well say, If God have decreed I shall have a Crop of Corn this ensuing year, I shall have it without Ploughing and Sowing; If God have decreed I shall come to my journeys end, I shall come thither, though I sit still, or walk a contrary way. It is a known rule, *Prædestinatus ad finem, ad media etiam prædestinatus*; God hath appointed means in order to the end; and what God hath joyned together, let no man put asunder:

asunder : He may justly lose the fruit of an happy end, that neglects the use of lawful means. God had promised to add fifteen years to *Hezekiah's* life. *Isa. 38.* and *Hezekiah* was assured of it by a certain sign from the Lord, yet he must take a lump of Figs and lay it for a Plaster upon the Bile, *vers. 21.* God assured *Paul* in that great tempest, that there should be no loss of any mans life among them, but of the Ship, *Acts 27. 22, 23, 24.* and *St. Paul* himself believed as much, *vers. 25.* yet tells them, *vers. 31. Except these abide in the Ship, ye cannot be saved.*

Object. 2. *But cannot God cure, if he will, without means, or by weak and improbable means ?*

Ans. Yes, God nourished *Moses* and *Elias* forty dayes without food ; he made Clay and Spittle, which one would think should put out sight, a means to recover it, *John 9. 6, 7.* He so wrought that the very shadow of *Peter* should heal multitudes of all Diseases, *Acts 5. 15.* *God's hand is not now shortened :* nor doth the *antient of dayes*, like an old man, grow weak and infirm in the latter end of the World. What he hath done he can still do, if it please him, *Psal. 115. 3.* But we are not to expect, now-adayes, God's miraculous working. *A potentia Dei ad actum non valet consequentia nisi etiam accedat voluntas Dei.* God commonly sets down a course of means which he will not alter ;

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alter; and then (as one saith) *it concerns us to answer providence with industry, and to put forth our strength, and use such means as God vouchsafes.* We are now to expect a concurrence of second causes, which in their Sphere may derive to every effect a proper vertue, through God's ordinary blessing.

Object. 3. *Best Physicians kill more than they cure.* Turba medicorum Celsam perdidit.

Ans. I think not so, but the chief reason why so many die in their hands, is this, Because people repair to them when it is too late,

— *Secò Medicina paratur.*

Hopes of outwrestling the Distemper, fear of expences, or some prejudice against Physicians, make many people to delay making application to them. Or it may be they have been tampering with some Quacksalvers or Mountebanks, for cheapness, (and indeed these may afford their Physick for little, for it is little worth, and their knowledge cost them little, having never seen the Universities, except in some journey) who not understanding the nature of the Distemper, apply wrong means, so that the Patients growing worse, betake themselves to a more learned man; but it is too late for him to cure them, so that men dying in his hand, he shall be sure to have his back saddled with illfavoured language, though he deserves it not.

Have

Have recourse then betimes to learned and experienced Doctors in that Art for the cure of you: Distempers: Thousands in this Nation, as well as my self, can tell you experimentally of the good service done this way.

4. Last Object. *If my appointed time be run up, means are not available.*

Ans. But who knows when his appointed time is run up? Old Isaac said, *I know not the day of my death*, Gen. 27. 2. Christ told the Apostles, Acts 1. 7. *It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power.* God makes none of his Privy Council herein. What saith Moses, Deut. 29. 29. *Secret things (such as this is) belong unto the Lord our God; but revealed things to us, &c.* Let us do our duty in consulting; Physicians, and then let God do his pleasure. Let us use means, and leave the success to God.

Means then are to be used, Physicians to be consulted, but God is principally to be eyed as the best Physician, for so indeed he is. And that you may find him ready to help you in your sickness, put these following Directions into practice.

1. *Pray, and get others to pray for thee.*

Thus did David in sickness and the like straits, as you may see *Psal.* 6. 2, 3, 4, 5. so *Psal.* 25. 16, 17,

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16, 17, 18. so *Psal.* 39. 10. The Title of the 142 *Psalms* is, *Maschil* of *David*; a *Prayer when he was in the Cave*. When thou art pursued with some violent Distemper, and confined to a sick-bed, as to a Cave, then make thy supplication unto God, as *David* did. I doubt not, as *Musculus* saith, but *David* in sickness made use of Medicines; but he prayes to God to bless those outward means, as knowing (*Nihil est omnis Medicorum ars & opera, cura & diligentia nisi Deus virtute sua det sanandi efficaciam*) that the Prescriptions and diligence of best Physicians, are of no worth and efficacy without God. *David* thus praying unto God, was healed by him, *Psal.* 30. 2, 3. O Lord my God, I cryed unto thee and thou hast healed me. So *Psal.* 116. 3, 4, 6, 8. compared. So *Hezekiah* by prayer unto God, had his deadly sickness removed, and life prolonged, *Isa.* 38. 2. *Hezekiah* having received a message of death, turned his face towards the Wall and prayed to the Lord. But why towards the Wall? either because by this means he withdrew himself from company, & his eyes from such objects as might distract and disturb his devotions; or as others say, Because there was but one single Wall between the Bed of the Kings of *Judea* and the Altar of God, (*Juxta parietem Templi Salomon extruxit palatium*) and they used to pray with their faces towards the Temple, (*1 King.* 8. 35, 48. *Dan.* 6. 10. *Psal.* 5. 6.). *Hezekiah* thus turning himself toward the Wall over against the Temple, and praying fervently to God

Musculus
in Pl. 6. 2.

See Cause-
sin's Holy
Court, p. 1

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God, was healed, as you may see *vers. 5.* Prayer is that which God directs his People unto in sickness and such like straits. *Psal. 50. 15: Call upon me in time of trouble, and I will deliver thee.* *Job 33. 26. He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him.* So *Jam. 5. 13. Is any man afflicted? let him pray.*

Quest. But if God send sickness, and for good ends unto his Children, is it not a sin in them to pray God to remove it, and to heal their bodily Distempers?

Ans. No; All flesh naturally desires health and preservation of life: And Grace in God's Children, doth not abolish but rectifie Nature,

Musculus
in *Pl. 6. 2.*
ubi plura.

(*Deus hoc carni naturaliter dedit ut sanitatem, i. e. conservationem sui capide petat. — Pius hanc naturam fides, non adimit sed dirigit.*)

So then God allows us to pray to him for health, so we do it with submission to the good Will of God, (as Christ prayed three times to his Father in his agony, *Mat. 26. 39. O my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt*) and with a resolution to serve him better if he spare us. Pray then that God would be pleased to have mercy upon you in your sickness, and to ease you of your pains, and restore you to health, and bless the means you use in order thereunto, if it be his blessed will. And as you ought to pray your selves, so you should get others (Ministers and good People) to pray for you,

you, see *James* 5. 14, 15, 16. God hears the prayers of his People, and oft-times for their sakes lengtheneth the life and outward prosperity of the wicked. God spared *Zoar* at the request of *Lot*, *Gen.* 19. 20, 21, 22. Those that sayled with *St. Paul* in the Ship, had their lives spared for his sake, see *Acts* 27. 24. for faith the Angel of God to *Paul*, *Lo, God hath given thee all them that sayl with thee*, (*Orig. κρηπίδας σου*, will give thee as a favour) no less then two hundred threescore and fifteen Souls, *vers.* 37. were saved in extremity of danger for *Paul's* sake, and at his request. Get then others, especially the Godly, who are God's Favourites to pray for thee. No doubt but *Paul* was a constant Sollicitor at the Throne of Grace in the behalf of *Epaphroditus*, who lay sick nigh unto death, and God had mercy on him.

2. Relie confidently upon God.

Though we make use of the Physicians Directions, yet we must not trust in them but in God: for means and second causes work by his continual influences, and receive their ends from his eternal order. As the Psalmist saith, *Psal.* 127. 1. *Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.* So except the Lord cooperate, means and second causes, which receive their being and efficacy from God, are vain and ineffectual. Faith was required in all those under the Gospel whom Christ cured, *Mat.* 9. 2. *Luk.* 8. 48. As we must not neglect means,

means, so neither must we trust in them, nor relie upon them; which if we do, it is the ready way to render them useles, see *Jer.* 17. 5, 6, 7, 8. *He that puts his trust in the Lord, saith the wise Man, Prov.* 28. 25. *shall be made fat, q. d. shall be lusty and well.* Relie then upon God's mercy for deliverance. He that highly esteems of God, is high in Gods esteem.

3. *Be merciful your selves to others in misery, if you would find mercy from God when you are in misery.*

Psal. 41. 1, 2, 3. *Blessed is the man that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble: the Lord will preserve him and keep him alive. — The Lord will strengthen him on the bed of languishing; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.* See likewise *Isa.* 58. 6, 7, 8. *After he had spoken of works of charity, he adds, Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily.* So *Mat.* 5. 7. *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* Epaphroditus went a long and perillous voyage to minister to the Apostles wants, *Phil.* 2. 25, 30. and when he was sick, nigh unto death, God had mercy on him.

Prov. 11.
25.

4. Lastly, *Be deeply humbled for your sins.*

This humiliation consists in confessing your sins with grief of heart, and putting away the sins you have lamented; and if we do thus, we shall

shall find mercy in sickness. *David* in sickness confessed and lamented his sins with a sorrowful heart, as you may read *Psal.* 32. 4, 5. & 38. 3, 4, 5, 18. so *Psal.* 41. 4. *Heal my Soul,* saith *David* under sickness, *for I have sinned against thee.* What a plea is this? *Heal my Soul,* *for I have sinned against thee.* Doth God delight in mens sins? Is he thereby allured to do them good? One would think as *Musculus* saith, *Magis faceret ad impedimentum quam ad causam impetranda sanitatis*; this should be rather an hindrance then furtherance to his cure: But the truth is, God, who loves not sin, yet loves to see sinners confess and bewail their sins; and if we do so, and withall forsake them, we shall find mercy in sickness as *David* did; for *Prov.* 28. 13. *He that covereth his sin shall not prosper; but whose confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy.* If sickness be epidemical, a general humiliation is a means to remove it, *Levit.* 26. 40, 41, 42. so 2 *Chron.* 3. 14. God sends sickness for sin; if sin be removed, he'll remove his stroke: but he will not take off the Playster (so careful he is) till the Wound be thoroughly cured, and corruption purged out. Sins are as so many Scotches in the way that hinder the Charriot Wheels of a Deliverance from moving swiftly towards us; if these sins were removed, deliverance would come on apace. When God then casts thee upon a sick-bed, *commune with thine own heart, and let thy spirit make diligent search,* *Psal.* 77. 6. Conscience at such a time, that bosom Preacher (if God in justice hath not silenced it for willful disobedience) will preach to thee thy
parti-

*Muscul. in
Psal. 41. 4.*

*Exod. 23.
25.*

*Deut. 7.
12, 15.*

particular sins. Affliction oft-times awakens a drowfie Conscience. Particular straits many times bring particular sins to remembrance, which have been long forgotten, as you may see *Gen.* 42. 21. so *Job* 36. 8, 9, 10. Harken then to the voice of Conscience, which may bring to mind thy particular sins, and seriously meditate upon the forementioned sins that tend to the impairing of health; and with *Job*, in sickness and sores, pray to God to shew thee *wherefore he contendeth with thee*, *Job* 10. 2. And again saith he, *Job* 13. 23. *Make me to know my transgression and my sin.* And as *Elihu* speaks, *Job* 34. 31. *That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.* Having thus found out thy sins, confess them with grief of heart, and deal with them, (as the Marriners dealt by *Jonah*, *Jon.* 1. 15.) cast them overboard, forsake them utterly so the storm may cease. If we thus *humble our selves under the mighty hand of God, he will exalt us in due time*, *1 Pet.* 5. 6. and raise us up from beds of languishment, (if he see it best for us) as he did *Epaphroditus* here, *who was sick, nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him.*

And so much for the first branch of this Use of Exhortation. I come now to the second branch, and it is a word of *Exhortation to such as have been sick, and God in mercy hath restored to health.* Let them be exhorted to take forth these following Lessons.

1. *Live in constant expectation of death, and preparation for death.* Many are too too confident of health after sickness, whereas it is ordinary

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niary for poor man to recover of one Distemper, and fall irrecoverably into the same again, or some other. *Non est sic illius misertus Deus ut ab hoc mortis debito in posterum prorsus esset liberatus.* Muscul. God was not so merciful unto Epaphroditus as that he should never die. The best of men, one time or other, how soon God knows, must pay the debt to extorting Nature, Ps. 89. 48. The Apostle speaks of the dissolution of the earthly house of this Tabernacle, 2 Cor. 5. 1. (*καταλυσθῆναι de re periturâ*) as of a thing that will shortly perish. So speaks St. Peter, 2 Pet. 1. 14. *I must shortly put off this my Tabernacle.* And truly after sickness we may rationally conclude, *That the house cannot stand long that hath been so terribly shaken.* Let us then, though reprieved for the present, expect death, and speedily prepare our selves for it: Eccl. 9. 10. *Whatever thy hand finds to do, do it with all thy might.* Let us bring our selves daily to a strict scrutiny, set soul and house in order, and speedily dress our selves for immortality; for we see, when sickness comes, we have work enough to wrestle with the Distemper. Oh my beloved, Put not off soul-concerns till old age or sickness; this is to lay the greatest burthen upon the weakest horse. Repentance is too great a task to be rightly performed upon a sick-bed, and usually like the party, it is at best but weak and sickly. Do not we who have been sick know by experience how unfit we are for any work at such a time, especially for this great work of repentance, which indeed should be an entire act of the whole life? And therefore,

Muscul. in
Phil. 2. 27.

2. *Live circumspectly.* Most men in sickness are seemingly devout, and therefore the Holy Ghost sets a brand upon *Abaz*, who in the time of distress did trespass yet more against the Lord, 2 Chron. 28. 22. *This is that King Abaz*; he points at him as a monster of man-kind: for men usually, during the continuance of distress, do seek unto the Lord, *Hos. 5. 15.* and bewail their sins and promise fair, as *Pharaoh*, *Abah*, and others; but when the force of his hand is removed, they return again to their old bias, they are as bad, if not worse then ever; like a dung-hill, the more the Sun of Mercy shines upon them, the more they stink and putrifie in all sin. See an unworthy carriage in *Hezekiah*, though for the main a good man, 2 Chron. 32. 24. there you read of his recovery from deadly sickness; and vers. 25. But *Hezekiah* rendred not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up. His heart was not lift up in the wayes of God (as it is said of *Jehoshaphat*, 2 Chron. 17. 6.) but in sinful wayes, as pride, self-conceit, &c. Therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon *Judah* and *Jerusalem*; and this wrath had broken forth upon them, had they not humbled themselves, and with tears of contrition quenched those flames, as you read v. 26. The Devil himself (as the story goes) when he was sicke would be holy and turn Monk, but when he was recovered, he was as much a Devil as before.

*Dr. Vanes
Wisdom
and Inno-
cence;

119.

**Ægrotat Damon, Monachus tunc esse volebat;
Convalescit Damon, Damon ante fuit.*
*The Devil was sick, the Devil a Monk would be;
The Devil was well, the Devil a Monk was he.*

But

But, O my Friends, let us labour to preserve that gracious frame that was in us in our sickness. If we be not careful, either wicked Company, or the cares of this World, will soon make us lukewarm or key-cold. Methinks the mercy of God in recovering us, should mightily affect us. We read, *1 Sam. 24. 6, 17, 18.* how David got *Saul* an advantage, and spared him when he had power to destroy him, whereupon *Saul* lift up his voice and wept; God that cast us on a sick-bed, might justly have cast us thence into Hell. He spared us when he might have destroyed us. O let it grieve us at the heart that ever we offended so good a God: And as the Apostle speaks, *1 Cor. 6. 15.* *Shall I take the Members of Christ, and make them Members of an Harlot?* God forbid. So let every one which God hath raised up again, say, *Shall I take the members of my body, which God hath delivered from grievous pains, and imploy them in sin and wickedness?* God forbid. I should be so vile a wretch. Methinks the remembrance of the great pain that we underwent in sickness, should humble us for our miscarriages all the days of our life after; *Lam. 3. 19, 20.* *Remembering my affliction & my misery, the Wormwood and the Gall; my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.* Besides, are not the vows of God upon us, as David speaks *Psal. 56. 12.* *Sacramental Vows, Personal Vows;* Did we not promise and vow, That if God restored us, we would be more holy and strict then ever? It is best for us to pay our Vows, *Deut. 23. 21. Eccl. 5. 4, 5.* we are perjur'd persons & truce-breakers (if we do not.) Defer not to put into action what

* *Sub-
miv non
ēgōiav.*

God's Spirit in sickness put into intention. Do as David did, when he *was brought low* God helped him, Psal. 116. 6. God delivered his soul from death, v. 8. See his resolution, v. 9. *I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.* He devoted himself to God's Service, v. 16. Truly, O Lord, I am thy Servant, I am thy Servant. And he likewise resolved to pay his Vows, v. 14, so v. 18. so likewise Psal. 66. 13, 14. *I will go into thine house with burnt-offerings: I will pay thee my Vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.* Let health, strength, life, soul, and body, the products of Gods mercy be presented to his service, Rom. 12. 1. I end this with that advice which Christ gave to one whom he cured, John 5. 14. Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

3. Apply your selves to God in future strains: pray unto him, trust in him. Thus did David, Psal. 116. 2. *Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.* So v. 17. *I will call upon the Name of the Lord.* So Ps. 56. 3. *What time I am afraid, I will put my trust in thee;* for v. 13. *Thou hast delivered my soul from death.*— So Ps. 63. 7. *Thou hast been my help;* therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoyce. See 1 Sam. 17. 37. so 2 Cor. 1. 9, 10. *We had the sentence of death* (saith the Apostle) *in our selves, that we should not trust in our selves, but in God which raised the dead;* who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us. It is good Scripture-logick (as * one saith)

* Mr. Reynolds
Psalms, p.
266,

to draw conclusions of confidence from premises of experience. Such then, whom God hath restored to health; when God casts them again into the Prison of a sick-bed, let them be still Prisoners of Hope, as the expression is, *Zach. 9. 12.* Suffer not Faith to flag, and Hope to hang wing. *Lam. 3. 26.* *It is good that a man should both hope and patiently wait for the salvation of the Lord.*

4. Sympathize with others that are in misery. If God have had mercy on thee, go thou and have mercy on others. Be not strained in your bowels, as some in the Church of Corinth were, *2 Cor. 6. 12.* Ob pity and pray for such as are in sickness and misery, and do them all offices of love and kindness that may be. Not only God calls for this, but the Law of friendship calls for it; *Job 6. 14.* *To him that is afflicted, pity should be shewed from his friend.* But yet *Job's* friends dealt very unfriendly with him, as you may see *v. 15.* whom he compares to a Brook, which in open weather, when people have least need of water, promiseth refreshment, but in cold weather is frozen up, and in hot weather is become dry; so that the weary Travellers fall short of their expectation: So you may find him complaining how he was forsaken of all Relations, *Job 19. 2, &c.* insomuch that he begs their pity upon the account of friendship, *v. 21.* *Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my Friends, for the hand of God hath touched me:* here is another Argument, for if you touch or strike upon the string of an Instrument, other strings move too: When God strikes another with sickness, we our selves should be moved with compassion

towards them; the sicknesses and miseries to
others call for your help; *Jos. 10. 6. Alms* &c.
As the Father said of *Lazarus's* sores, *Quia ni-*
cera ista ora, so many sores, so many moans call-
ling for the rich mans help. Yea, though they
be their enemies, you should pity them as *David*
did, *Psal. 37. 11, 12, 13, &c.* Though compassion
on begin at the heart, yet it should proceed to
the hand and mouth; help them with your
counsels and prayers, and purses too. *Sic enim*
per compassionem dotalis magna manus afflictionis
doloris ostendat. What the good *Samaritan* did,
Luk. 10. 30, &c. By which passage our Saviour
would teach us to have pity on those, whether
friends or enemies, acquaintance or strangers that
stand in need of our help, *v. 37. Go then and*
do likewise. The Greek word *iniquos*, that
signifies *Alms*, comes from *misericordia*, that signifies
Pity: *Alms* should be a fruit of pity, *1 Cor. 13.*
17. If you who have known what it is to lie un-
der sickness do not pity such folk, who should?
if you do not, who will? *1 Cor. 13. 17.*
5. Lastly, Give God the sole praise of all;
let him have the glory of the cure, for to him it
belongs, and it is a piece of sacrilege to rob God
of his due. We should not give, nor should
any man take to himself the glory of a cure.
Neither *Peter* nor *John*, *Act. 3. 12.* *Paul* nor
Barnabas, *Act. 14. 11, &c.* durst take to them-
selves the glory of a cure. Every Physician should
say as the King of *Israel* in another case said to
the Woman crying out to him for help, *2 King.*
6. 26, 27. *If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall*
I help thee? The best Physicians can do nothing
with-

Epaphroditus's recovery.

without Gods assistance: Simples are but simple things without the blessing of God upon them. Who put medicinal qualities into Drugs, but the God of Nature? Whence had the Physitian his skill to find out the quality of the Distemper, and apply suitable means but from the God of Wisdom, *Jam. 1. 5?* Christ said, *Mat. 4. 4. Man lives not by bread alone, &c.* Nor is man recovered by Physick alone without Gods blessing. *Pf. 107. 18, 19, 20. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw near to the gates of death: then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble: he saveth them out of their distress: he sent his Word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.* It follows, *v. 21. O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*

Quest. But may we not thank our Physitian?

Ans. Yes, and you are too blame if you do not. Ingratitude is an odious sin, *Gen. 40. 23.* compared with *Gen. 41. 9.* It is one of the sins that makes the last times so perillous, *2 Tim. 3. 2.* The Heathen thought you could not give a man a more odious title then to call him ungrateful, (*Ingratum si dixeris omnia*) as though it was a compendium of all vices; and indeed it is a decomposed sin. *Ahasuerus* was too blame to forget loyal-hearted *Mordecai* so long, (who had been a means to save his life) till it was almost too late to remember him; He was to be commended for conferring civil dignities upon him afterwards, as you read he did *Esth. 6.* Let such as are unthankful to Physitians, and to such as are a means to save their lives from destruction, go to School to those *Barbarians*, *Acts 28. 8, 9, 10.* from whom they may learn lessons of Civility; They honoured *Saint Paul* (who healed many amongst them of many Diseases) with many honours; and when he with the rest of his company departed, they laded them with such things as were necessary. Well then, you may
and

Epaphroditus recovery.

and ought to thank them as Instruments, but remember that God is the supreme efficient. They are to be rewarded and respected for their pains and care with us, but God alone is to be praised for the Cure wrought upon us: God is the Fountain, they are but as Pipes to convey God's mercies to us. Let us then give God the praise of all, as the Angels sung, *Gloria in Excelsis, Glory be to God on high, Luk. 2. 14.* And as Christ hath taught us, *Mat. 6. 13. For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever, Amen.* That Woman in the Gospel cured of the Disemper, called by the Greeks *ιμπεριδοροσ*, Glorified God, as you may read *Luke 13. 13.* There were ten Lepers that lift up their voices, and said, *Jesus, Master, have mercy on us, Luk. 17. 13.* Yet being cleansed, there was but one of them that turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, *vers. 15.* But Christ took notice of their ingratitude, *v. 17, 18.* *There was but one of ten that returned to give thanks.* 'Tis ten to one if God cure us but we prove ungrateful. Oh let us not in sickness pray for mercy, and in health forget to return thanks for the receipt of mercy. *Non sines illud tantum miserere Deus, sed et gratiarum actio pro accepta illius.* *Phil. 2. 27.* *David* was much in praising God for deliverance from deadly dangers, as the *Psalms* testify. *Psal. 30. 1, 3, 4. & 86. 12, 13. & 103. 3. & 104. 35. & 116. 6, 12, 17. & 118. 14. & 146. v. 1, 2.* So *Hezekiah* being recovered, pens a Song of Thanksgiving, *Isa. 38. 9, &c.* Oh my beloved extraordinary mercies call for more then ordinary thanks, *Exod. 12. 42.* Communicate your experiences, *Psal. 66. 16.* Tell others of the cures God hath wrought, *Joh. 5. 15. Mar. 5. 19.* The tongue is called our glory, *Psal. 16. 9.* Let your glory sing praise to God, and not be silent, *Psal. 30. 12.* Wherein is your tongue a glory, if not in setting forth the glory of God? I end all with that Doxology of the Apostle, *1 Tim. 1. 17.* *Now unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, &c. only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever Amen.*

Δόξα τῷ Θεῷ.

F I N I S.

La bace figne

